

D E L I A,

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P A T H E T I C

A N D

I N T E R E S T I N G

T A L E.

*Virtue when distress'd, can smile on Death,
And as a friend embrace it.*

—————*Yes, thou shalt find
Women, when armed with Virtue, know no fear
But guilt and shame.*

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

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VOL. I.

—————
L O N D O N,

Printed for WILLIAM LANE, Leadenhall Street,
1790.



D E L I A.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

Bloomfield, Nov. 20th, 1781:

SINCE your departure I have been very solitary, very sad, and which you will think much more extraordinary, very silent. I think of you incessantly: I am tormented with an anxious impatience to know how your affairs are to terminate. Must you give up your fortune, my dear Henrietta! must you voluntarily deprive yourself of the noble inheritance to which by your father's will you are entitled.—But is the calamity inevitable! where is the law that can compel you to renounce your indisputable right! Yet when I reflect on

the alternative—Oh, my dear friend, your mother's conduct—but I will not trust myself on a subject on which I can neither think with patience, nor write with decency.

Yet let us look forward to brighter days. Let us listen to the suggestions of the dear flatterer, Hope. Let the sweet visionary expatiate without controul: send her forth from your bosom, like the dove from the ark, in quest of a resting place; she will fly hither to Bloomfield, she will perch on my breast, and fondly repose on its fidelity and friendship; she will return to you with the olive branch, the emblem of future peace.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LET-

L E T T E R II.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

MY dear Delia, my ever kind and indulgent friend; when I reflect on that affectionate attention, that sweet solicitude so continually exerted to amuse and console me, I am displeased with myself for suffering any human misfortune to counteract the efforts of your tenderness. But so very distressingly as I am situated—in time, however, I shall learn to submit to the calamity, which I acknowledge, I have not philosophy enough to despise. You insinuate I might still avoid this calamity, and say there is no law to compel me to the resignation of my fortune. Oh! Delia, how differently would you have argued had the cause been your own! Yes, my dear friend, there is a law—venerable, sacred and indispensible to every upright heart, the law of moral rectitude. Who

should suffer the effects of my mother's extravagance but me who have been the partaker of it! who have entered with avidity into every expensive scheme of pleasure, and by the thoughtless dissipation of my conduct have plunged her in deeper distresses! Should I listen to the dictates of a narrow and sordid prudence; should I reserve to myself the means of luxury and splendor—it is on the poor the vices of the rich fall heavy, how many of the honest and industrious might be involved in ruin by the selfish and inequitable resolution? and would not the cry of the widow and the orphan rise up to heaven against me!

Can I then hesitate to form a determination exacted by justice, solicited by compassion, and demanded by friendship? Yes, Delia, I repeat it, to your friendship I owe this sacrifice to equity. Whilst I receive each day new proofs of the generous fervor of your heart, and the indissoluble constancy of its attachment, can I resolve to render myself unworthy this pure and noble friendship by renouncing

nouncing that rectitude by which only it can be merited?

To the memory of my father I also owe this sacrifice. In a fond enthusiasm of mind I sometimes fancy I behold his sacred shade exulting in the effects of his own precepts and example, and looking down with delighted complacency on the resolution of a child, who, though she has been reprehensible in conduct, is incorruptible in integrity!

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

L E T T E R I I I .

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

IF I once entered into the fashionable world, and pursued amusement with an ardour excusable in youth, how dearly have I suffered for the venial transgression! Oh Delia, our affairs are even more desperate than I imagined! with what as-

fiduity has my mother, cruelly kind, concealed from me their real situation. She still vainly endeavours to continue the deception, though I assured her I was no longer to be imposed on.

“ It is now too late to dissemble,” said I. “ I know the worst. Our misconduct and extravagance have reduced us to ruin; and all we can now do is to yield with decency and propriety to the misfortune we cannot avoid. Let us immediately sell our estate, let us satisfy the creditors who continually besiege our doors, and with the pittance that remains, retire to some retreat where we may recover that serenity which is incompatible with our present circumstances. Forgive the freedom of my remonstrances,” continued I; “ forgive me if in this one instance I venture to dispute your pleasure; but I can no longer consent to a course of life so repugnant to my reason, and mortifying to my spirit.” “ Mortifying to your spirit!” repeated she, “ Ah Henrietta, I fear

con- " fear, but it will be time enough to
 She " speak of these matters in spring. If
 the " we must retire to the country, it will
 s no " be less intolerable in summer; besides,
 " something favourable may occur this
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“ You astonish me,” said I, “ what advantage can I derive from an intercourse with the great? I, who am on the point of being for ever separated from their society, and who most ardently wish I had never been introduced to it. I presume not to prescribe rules for your conduct, but I entreat you will permit me to regulate my own. I cannot go into public at a time so peculiarly improper. Does not every one know the melancholy situation of our affairs? In other circumstances I should not be ashamed of poverty, for it is only the affectation of affluence which renders it contemptible; but now wherever we go, methinks the finger of ridicule is pointed at us, and a sentiment of conscious meanness induces me to construe every glance into a sarcasm, every smile into derision! Forgive me, my dear mother,” continued I, perceiving she was affected, “ it distresses me to be obliged to speak to you

“ thus

thus plainly, but indeed I am very unhappy!"

Though exceedingly softened by my expostulations, her weak partiality, her mistaken apprehension of afflicting me would not suffer her to speak of our circumstances with candour; she acknowledged that although my fears aggravated the distresses of our affairs, they were at present greatly embarrassed. She wiped away my tears and pressed me to her bosom, but her soothing professions of maternal tenderness concluded in endeavouring to prevail on me to accept Lady N—'s invitation.

Perhaps I ought not to have yielded to her entreaties; perhaps there are duties superior even to our filial ones! my reason tells me there are, but my heart refuses to acknowledge them; at least such virtue is "too excellent for me;" and I cannot persuade myself there is merit in any thing which can give her pain.

I consented, however, on condition it should be the last time; and on Thursday

evening am once more to make my public exhibition.

It requires no great sagacity, my dear Delia, to penetrate my mother's views. Any personal advantages your friend may possess, seen through the medium of her partial fondness, appear with ten-fold lustre; my father in his choice of her was entirely disinterested; for the riches of her family consisted only in a long line of ancestry and an illustrious title. She thinks me possessed of as many attractions, and fancies I cannot be less fortunate than herself; but views of this nature are no less romantic in her than they are degrading to me to be received through courtesy into the circles of the great—to be pointed at in every public place, as a girl whose only dependance is on a person which she exhibits in order to dispose of it to the best advantage—a female fortune-hunter! No, my dear friend, these are humiliations to which nothing shall force me to submit! The ruin that threatens to overwhelm us cannot be more dreadful than
my

my present situation. I think I could behold its approach with calmness were I alone to suffer. I could fly for refuge to the arms of my Delia and her reverend parents, and whilst my soul reposed on her sympathizing bosom, it could view with indifference the contempt of an unfeeling world. But when I reflect on the reverse of fortune my mother must sustain—but why do I complain to you! why infect you with my melancholy! yet of one good effect it will be productive; every disagreeable circumstance will vanish from your situation when you contrast it with that of your friend.

I frequently see your mother; her sister, Lady Wharton is at present with her; but as the air of Ireland disagrees extremely with her ladyship, she and Sir Charles propose returning immediately to France. Lady Harriot speaks of visiting you in your retirement after her departure. What her motives are for wishing you to remain in the country I cannot conceive: surely no one ever so tenderly loved a daughter.

in-law: why then does she voluntarily deprive herself of your society? Is not this one of those unaccountable caprices by which the conduct of even the most sensible and worthy are sometimes influenced?

Friday morn. 5 o'clock.

What accumulated misfortunes have I undergone in the course of the past day! But I should previously inform you that since my return from Bloomfield, I missed by much the most valuable part of our family jewels. However, I dreaded to make enquiries which might occasion disagreeable explanations, and indeed I had still much more than I thought suitable to my circumstances. I was somewhat surprized this morning when my mother brought them to me and insisted on my wearing them at night; I consented with excessive reluctance, but judge my astonishment and vexation, when a short time afterwards on going into her dressing room I found the copy of a note, written in her hand, and addressed to a person whose
name

name I was unacquainted with, entreating the loan of the jewels (which I now understood were pawned for a considerable sum of money) for this night only; and assuring him the plate she sent was fully equivalent in value. She entered the room and found me in tears, which the paper I held accounted for. Again I expostulated; I endeavoured to shew her the impropriety of the appearance she wished me to assume; but she was deaf to my entreaties and insisted on the performance of my promise in a strain so peremptory, that I perceived it was in vain to offer any opposition. I suffered the friseur to dress my head according to her directions; it was dinner time before the painful operation was completed; she and her woman spent the greatest part of the evening in adjusting the important minutiae of my dress; I left it entirely to themselves, nor did I even go to the glass when the labours of the toilet were finished. There was a time when I should not have been so indifferent, but

but within two years how greatly are my prospects altered !

At half past seven we went to Lady N—'s, where we found the ladies who were to accompany us already assembled.

We had scarcely been seated, when a young gentleman in the dress of a clergyman entered the room. You have often remarked that the sacred habit is becoming ; but I never before thought it so peculiarly so ; in the person who now wore it dignity seemed happily blended with politeness, and gaiety with good sense ; though not strikingly handsome, he possessed that amiable and engaging cast of countenance, which, to a discerning eye, is infinitely more captivating than beauty. Lady N— received him with distinction. I afterwards learned he is related to her.

Encouraged by the easy affability of his manner, I joined in the conversation, but whilst I spoke I observed that he turned and examined me with an attention that once perhaps, might have been flattering to my vanity ; but now I fancied I beheld

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an air of reprehension in his countenance. My face glowed and I felt most painfully embarrassed. Lady N— requested me to play on the harpsichord; I had not spirit or resolution to refuse; he arose to lead me to the instrument, but when we were in the middle of the room, his feet got entangled in my monstrous train that covered half the floor, and as I turned to disengage it, one of my enormous feathers struck against his eyes. He hastily put up his hands, whilst I endeavoured to stammer out something like an apology. He smiled, Delia; was it not the smile of contempt! at that instant I caught a view of my figure in a large mirror. How admirably was the elegant simplicity of his appearance contrasted with the vanity and extravagance of mine. My gown was white satin richly starred with silver and trimmed with an intermixture of sable and silver fringe, my hoop sufficiently large, but my head was preposterous beyond conception! a stupendous structure composed of feathers, flowers, jewels and powder; but

but the dazzling brilliancy of my appearance, glittering in borrowed finery, excited in my bosom the most depressive and humiliating reflections.

I sat down to the harpsichord and endeavoured to accompany it with my voice. The first air that occurred was part of Milton's *Il Penseroso*. "Hence vain deluding joys." It was consonant with my feelings. I felt a tear steal down my cheek. I thought Mr. Wentworth perceived my emotion. If he should enquire into my circumstances, what an opinion must he entertain of me! but of what consequence are his sentiments to me. Lady N— pressed him to accompany us to the Theatre, but he excused himself and promised to attend her at supper.

We got into the house in the middle of the second act. I was greatly entertained with the piece, which was the *Duëna*; some of the characters were admirably performed.

At the end of the third act a person who bore on his breast the insignia of nobility,

bility, entered the box and saluted Lady N—, who sat next me in the front seat with an air of familiarity. At the conclusion of the entertainment I observed that he viewed me attentively, and heard him enquire in a low whisper “who I was?” on hearing my name, “what envious cloud,” said he, in a louder voice, “has veiled this bright luminary from the gaze of public admiration!” I smiled at this gallantry in a man near sixty. When we arose to leave the house, Lady N— invited him to supper, and he very readily accepted the invitation.

We found Mr. Wentworth awaiting our return; they insisted on my playing once more, and my spirits, though still low, were not so extremely depressed as they had been the preceding part of the evening. The duke of B— either was, or affected to appear particularly charmed. He attached himself to me the remainder of the night, and listened to my words with an attention that kept me almost entirely silent. The company was numerous and

and brilliant, and the conversation was such as would have been entertaining to a mind at ease.

It was four in the morning before we returned, and my mother as soon as we were alone congratulated me on my conquest with a seriousness that amazed me. Lady N— she said had remarked it to her; that the duke had been a widower these ten months, and, in fine, that there was not the least reason to doubt his intentions in my favour. She concluded with saying, she now hoped to see her Henrietta raised to that exalted rank for which she was so eminently adapted by her beauty and accomplishments. I know not which I was most vexed or surprized at this strange conceit; that such an idea should enter the whimsical brain of a novel-reading girl of fifteen might not be astonishing; but that a person who has passed her life in an intercourse with the great world; who has had so many opportunities of observing the emptiness of those little gallantries, in which men of rank are so apt to indulge them-

themselves, should thus suffer herself to be deluded by the dreams of fancy, is truly unaccountable.

I hope to return to you before the end of winter. The morning begins to dawn. Adieu.

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

L E T T E R I V.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

I No longer oppose your resolution, though I deeply regret the necessity which enforces it. Henrietta, you are right; there is but one blessing in this world, substantial, permanent, beyond the reach of fate; a conscious rectitude of heart; nor is it dearly purchased though with the loss of every other advantage. But you, my friend, are still possessed of many; still in the morn of life, in the vernal

vernal bloom of beauty; adorned by every external grace, every intellectual charm that confers real loveliness on woman. I would not flatter your vanity by these encomiums, but I would animate your spirits with a consciousness of your own importance. I would not expect in a girl of your age that stoical and unnatural apathy of mind which affects to despise the vicissitudes of fortune; but I would lessen the consequence of the advantages you are obliged to relinquish, by convincing you of the superior value of those you still possess.

You bid me contrast my situation with yours. I have done so, but how light did your distresses appear when weighed against those I have suffered! Have I not experienced that misfortune which of all others is most painful and oppressive to a youthful mind! Disappointed in my fondest wishes, in my tenderest hopes! Abandoned by the object of an enthusiastic passion, a passion conceived almost in infancy, confirmed by revolving years, and

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encouraged by the approbation of my friends. How have my health, my peace, my vivacity suffered by this desertion! had even my efforts to subdue this unhappy attachment, been assisted by the unworthiness of the man that inspires it, but except in one instance, his inconstancy to me, where could a female heart find for its tenderness an object so unexceptionable as Bloomfield. A thousand times have I called pride to my aid and endeavoured to despise him; but it was impossible! his idea seemed inseparably connected with every manly, noble and ingenuous sentiment. I could not recall it to my mind without tenderness, or reflect on it without admiration. I had but one expedient left, that of endeavouring to forget him; but at Bloomfield, where the dejection of melancholy was deepened by the gloom of retirement; where every walk, every grove, every grotto, had been the scene of some delightful interview, some pleasing incident or instructive conversation, it was impracticable. I left it as soon as my health would

would permit me ; in opposition to lady Harriet's inclination and advice, I accompanied her to Dublin, and hoped to drown in scenes of gaiety and dissipation those corroding remembrances which were nourished by solitude. Perhaps I might have succeeded but for an unlucky, though very trifling accident. It was at one of your mother's parties I met Major Franklin, who had been the friend and fellow-foldier of Bloomfield, in America. On hearing my name, he hastily approached me, and entering into conversation, enquired if Captain Bloomfield, (he was not then advanced to his present rank) was my brother ? O Henrietta, you were present and must remember the fervent eulogiums he lavished on the young hero ! on his magnanimity, his sweetness, his humanity, his liberality, his noble ardour in the pursuit of glory, and his amiable clemency to the vanquished ! It was more than I could bear. I complained of a violent pain in my head, but it was my heart that ached. I went home in disgust, determined to return next day

day to Bloomfield, and lady Harriet encouraged me to persevere in my intention.

It is true, I have at length regained my tranquility; yet ideas will recur, fruitless wishes, vain regrets arise; gladly would I purchase the oblivion of these melancholy retrospections were my fortune, large as it is, to be the recompence.

Now what are the misfortunes with which you are threatened? the loss of fortune, equipage and grandeur, which, though in the language of philosophy they may be termed glittering trifles, it is difficult for those who have been accustomed to them to learn to despise. Yet were they really essential to the happiness of mankind in general, how unjust must that providence be which has limited the possession of them to a few individuals? but the heartfelt cheerfulness which inspires the rustic mirth of the poor industrious peasant convinces us they are not, and teaches us that peace is the offspring of temperance and labour.

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But you, Henrietta, of all human beings, will have least reason to complain of the disadvantages of indigence; you who embrace it from choice, not compelled by necessity; you to whom the calm approbation of your own heart is the noblest treasure, and who have secured it to yourself at the expence of that dross which is the idol of mankind. Oh, my friend, who shall dare to arraign the wisdom of your election, or look down with contempt on a poverty so glorious! Should even the vain, the haughty and unfeeling despise it, the elevation of your own sentiments will enable you to return them a ten-fold proportion of disdain; for it is the privilege of the truly generous spirit to feel the most animating consciousness of its own superiority, when assailed by the little despicable malice of detraction, or the supercilious arrogance of pride. But the esteem of those whose tenderness is worth preserving, will be raised to admiring reverence; for never do the beams of virtue shine with such superior lustre as when they illuminate

illumine the darkness of adversity! but let us not speak of adversity—will the sacred friendship which unites our hearts acknowledge any narrow distinctions? will Henrietta refuse to share *her* fortune who has already conferred on her what she esteems infinitely more valuable, her tenderness—her confidence—her more than sisterly affection. I earnestly anticipate the time which shall put me in possession of a fortune I never valued but as the means of promoting the happiness of those I loved.

How agreeably do you flatter me with the hope of your return: even the distant prospect of it has restored my vivacity. My grandfather enquired the occasion of my unusual gaiety, and when I informed him, was scarcely less delighted than myself. One of aunt Sophy's good natured smirks evinced her satisfaction, and my grandmother's countenance was brightened by a benevolent smile.

But I ought to congratulate you on your conquest! a Duke will make no

trifling figure in your list of adorers; and his being somewhat advanced in life, in my opinion, confers the greatest glory. I cannot help fancying that the present race of men is strangely degenerated. What swarms of animals infest each public place, the effeminacy of whose persons corresponds with the enervation of their minds.

Equally devoid of manly spirit and sensibility, the unmeaning compliments they address to the women they meet, should they condescend to address any—flow not from admiration excited by an amiable object, but are merely intended to display their own fancied wit and vivacity. For my part, I confess I could listen with much more complacency to the tender professions of an hoary bearded Methuselah, than to the insipid and disgusting effusions of a modern petit maitre.

I am as much at a loss as you can possibly be, to conceive my lady mother's motives for wishing to immure me in this desert

desart. I fancy she imagines I might be induced to partake of the amusements of the town with a freedom, which would be prejudicial to my health, which I cannot persuade her is yet perfectly re-established. My father, I know, would be highly gratified by my spending the greatest part of my time in Dublin; but you know her dominion over him is absolute. I must however do her the justice to acknowledge, that "though she rules, she never *shows* the rules;" an happy art which it is greatly to be wished that every lady who chuses to spare her husband the trouble of governing himself, would endeavour to acquire; as it would be the means of avoiding much domestic discord, and preventing those eternal feuds which embitter the repose of many an unfortunate family. The woman must be weak and worthless indeed, who places her glory in inverting the order of nature, and makes a parade of her influence over the person whom duty and reason point out as her superior. An arrogant display

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play of power, though detestable on either side, is peculiarly so on ours: but she who holds in silken chains the heart she has captivated by gentleness, and leads it to fair and honourable pursuits, is an object worthy the imitation and the reverence of her sex. In the latter class does not Lady Harriot deserve the most distinguished rank? My father's union with her has augmented rather than lessened his affection for me; and the tender attention, the maternal solicitude with which she watched over my youth, sufficiently evince the warmth of her affection. When my enfeebled constitution, sinking beneath the weight of anguish which preyed upon my mind, was reduced to the verge of the grave, how many nights has she hung over my pillow bathed in tears! But you, my Henrietta, who shared with her the melancholy office, were witness to her goodness. Indissolubly attached by the ties of gratitude, the daughter, like the father, is become the slave of that irresistible charm, that soft persuasion, with
which

which she sooths the passions of mankind, and renders them subservient to her own designs.

I cannot censure your resolution of going no more into public; but it is a sacrifice to propriety which few girls so deservedly admired would voluntarily make.

Adieu, my dear friend; still let our mutual tenderness alleviate the calamities of life, and never let us think ourselves unfortunate, whilst possessed of each other's affection.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER V.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

IT was right to hold to your Henrietta's view, the picture of your sufferings: teach me, my amiable friend, to emulate the meek resignation with which you submitted to them; they were, I acknowledge, greatly

greatly superior to my distresses, and they were aggravated by the peculiar sensibility of your soul.

I did not acquaint you, I believe, that the Duke obtained my mother's permission to visit us, before we parted at Lady N—'s. He availed himself of this liberty the next day; and the rapture with which she received him, was visible in her countenance. He is penetrating, and must have observed it. How greatly should I be mortified if I thought it possible he should discover her fantastic hopes; for fantastic they still appear, though his conduct may have given some slight foundation for them. He appears sensible, good-natured and agreeable; but, Delia, if he verify my mother's predictions, how very wretched would it render me! for though I should join with you in preferring him to the generality of our modern fine gentlemen, the disparity of our years would effectually prevent these sentiments which alone can authorise a delicate mind to enter into the most sacred

sacred of all human engagements. But you will think me as romantic as my mother.

I visited Lady Harriot this morning: she told me in a transport of pleasure, that she every day expects her son, Lord Archer's, arrival. Sir Charles and Lady Wharton sailed yesterday; the health of the latter is in a very declining situation, and they purpose proceeding directly to the south of France. Lady Harriot, intends visiting you after Lord Archer's return. We are to spend this evening with her, and our hour approaches.

Affure your venerable friends of my affectionate and grateful remembrance.

Farewell.

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

L E T T E R VI.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

Bloomfield, Nov. 30th.

I Have sat in the dark all the evening, watching the embers of a dying fire, whilst the demons of the tempest, squalling for admittance around the walls of this solitary mansion, mix their discordant voices with the soft murmurs of an æolian harp. Yet this, melancholy as it is, is preferable to the manner in which I usually spend my evenings. Imagine you see us in the drawing room after dinner—Aunt Sophy sitting working her cross-stitch, which is fancied in the most curious taste you can conceive, with her spectacles on her nose, and her little basket of party-coloured worsteds at her elbow—Grandmama nodding in her easy chair, at one side of the fire—Grandpapa in the same situation vis-a-vis—his favourite water-spaniel

spaniel stretched across the hearth, basking in the warm sun-shine of a blazing fire. Your friend spread out, with her toes resting on the fender, and her head reclined on the back of her chair, her eyelids closed and her mouth half open. What a delightful quintetto! I include the spaniel, take notice. Aunt Sophy, kind creature! in compassion to my want of entertainment, begins anew some of those antient anecdotes, with which her memory abounds; perhaps the story of her former loves, her darling theme, gives her eloquence an opportunity of exerting itself!

“ How many youths her myrtle chains have worn,

“ How many virgins at her triumphs pined !”

Then how her eyes twinkle through her spectacles at the recollection of their former conquests, whilst deep and repeated yawns denote my attention. The Dean too, her present favourite hobby-horse, frequently supplies her with a topic of conversation; and spavined and foundered

dered as he is with the gout, he sometimes prances away at a most unmerciful rate. Then, by way of varying our amusements, comes a delectable party at whist, where half our precious time is lost in endeavouring to recollect what the trump is, and who dealt last; matters I generally leave to themselves to determine. Whist is, of all others, the game for which I feel the strongest aversion; its very name excites my detestation! the continual clack of piquet keeps awake the attention, for there is something wonderfully enchanting in the music of one's own voice, but in whist the faculty of speech becomes almost entirely useless! that glorious privilege which so eminently distinguishes us from the brute creation, and gives us an opportunity of evincing our rationality. "And our irrationality too, Delia." Be quiet, Henrietta, none of your innuendo's.

This evening, however, our good neighbour the Dean supplies my place at the card-table. The poor soul has been complaining

plaining of the gout, which greatly damps the pleasure I should otherwise receive from his company; for to have him laid up amongst us, would be far from conducing to the amusement of our society. But perhaps it is only an artifice to excite Aunt Sophy's commiseration. Pity, you know, is near akin to love, and these men are strange crafty animals!

The truth is, I have taken infinite pains to persuade them into a reciprocal passion, which was singularly generous in me, who am to be the lady's heiress. Are they not congenial spirits, formed by nature for each others felicity! the Dean dries caterpillars and butterflies, and Aunt Sophy makes shell-work, and hatches silkworms! then her swain, who is somewhat of an antiquarian, far from desiring to rub off the precious dust of revolving years, will give her the highest rank in his cabinet of curiosities: an honour, you will acknowledge, to which she is every way entitled!

What a trifler I am! nay worse, I fear you will tell me I have degenerated into

downright pertness and ill-nature. "Poor
" Aunt Sophy," you will say, "cannot
" even the candour and gentleness of thy
" own spirit blunt the pointed shafts of
" ridicule! must a few little foibles, (for
" even detraction cannot call them faults)
" must they be selected from a thousand
" virtues, and held forth to the eye of ob-
" servation? by the hand of thy favou-
" rite too."

I would advise you, Henrietta, to make
a beautiful Auto-de-fe (as Voltaire calls it)
of this letter; it is heterodox, and de-
serves to be delivered over to the secular
arm. Yet I cannot avoid it. Nature
has given me a strong perception of the
ludicrous; the love of ridicule is a dis-
temper incident to my mind, and when it
is in its paroxysm, it must have one to fall
foul of! if I hold the pen much longer,
heaven knows who may next become the
subject of my speculations! your own mo-
ther, perhaps, a much more copious one
than poor Aunt Sophy. See! I begin
again!

But

But this Duke of your's, Henrietta—really I begin to be of Lady Willmore's opinion! the Dutcheſs of B—! you muſt be more than woman to reſiſt the dazzling temptation.

I wait impatiently for your next letter, which I ſuppoſe will enable me to judge how ſoon I ſhall have the honour of ſubſcribing myſelf

Your Grace's moſt obedient,

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

L E T T E R V I I .

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

SING te-deum for me, Henrietta! a roſe has bloomed ſuddenly in the deſart! a new ſtar has appeared in our hemisphere! in other and more intelligible terms, I have gotten—that is, I ſhall get,
a ſwain :

a swain : I have seen him already, and so conclude the business more than half done.

This being Sunday, we were preparing in the morning to go to church, when my grandfather entered the room and informed us, that our good Dean was so violently attacked with the gout, as to confine him to his bed-chamber.

“ Then we shall have no service,” cried I, throwing aside a great furred cloak, in which I was going to inwrap myself.

“ Yes we shall ;” replied he, “ for old Bryan, with whom I have just now been speaking, informs me, that a young gentleman, a nephew of the Dean, who came yesterday from Dublin to visit him, is to officiate in his place and perform the duties of the day.”

By an involuntary impulse I pulled the bell—and Jenny appearing, I called for my new cloak and embroidered muff, and examining my cap in the glass, would have

have changed that too, had I not feared the metamorphosis would have become too conspicuous, and that Aunt Sophy would not have omitted an opportunity of teasing me in turn. However, perceiving my *tout ensemble* was far from being despicable, I sallied forth, pretty confident of succeeding in my meritorious design. My parson (who, I will venture to affirm, is infinitely superior to yours) immediately afterwards made his appearance from the vestry room, and getting into the desk, went through the prayers with a dignified simplicity, a reverential attention that recalled my vagrant ideas from their wanderings, and made me blush at the levity of my thoughts. His sermon was clear, concise, demonstrative; and the language, though adapted to the capacities of the congregation, which consists chiefly of the lower rank, elegant; but it derived its greatest beauties from the peculiar grace and justness, with which it was delivered.

When

When we got into the carriage, on our return, we all joined in encomiums on our young divine.

“Methinks,” said I, after the preacher and his sermon had been sufficiently discussed—“methinks civility obliges us to visit the poor Dean, this morning; nor will it, I fancy, be disagreeable to my aunt, for though her excessive delicacy prevents her proposing it, full many a wistful glance has she cast towards Firdale, since we got into the carriage.”

“O, you are mighty kind indeed,” replied she, “and the Dean and I should be greatly obliged to you for your charity, and compassion, only it is so easy to see through your motives—but for my part, I can tell you, I don’t understand being made a cat’s paw of.”

“I acknowledge the justice of your insinuation,” said I, perceiving that the laugh was against me, “you are all sensible, that the solitary manner, in which I spend my time, is by no means

“ means suitable to my taste, and that
“ an agreeable companion of either sex,
“ but particularly of the male, would
“ afford a pleasing relaxation to my mind,
“ and lighten the burden of the *ennui*, by
“ which I am so frequently oppressed—
“ Now, this little parson is the very man
“ I wanted, and I shall no longer envy
“ my aunt her flirtations with the Dean,
“ nor, as I shall find employment for my-
“ self of a similar nature, shall I be under
“ the necessity of interrupting their tender
“ *tete-a-tetes* for the future.”

My grandfather allowed my vindication to be perfectly reasonable, and ordering the coachman to drive to the Dean's, we were shortly after ushered into his bed-chamber. He was sitting in his easy chair, and made a most lamentable figure, all wrapped up in flannel.

We sat half an hour chatting, our young divine was, as you will conjecture, the subject of our conversation. He is just returned from making the grand tour, in character of a tutor to a nobleman's son.

What

What a young preceptor — he appears scarcely four and twenty, but though his years are green, his wisdom is mature. I wish he may continue here, if it were only to spare me the pain of endeavouring to keep my eyes open during the tedious and elaborate disquisitions, with which the Dean regales us every Sunday morning.

I stood at a window that looks into the garden, and saw him walking towards the house; soon after he entered the room and saluted us in a pleasing and graceful manner. These parsons are very delightful creatures, Henrietta; Aunt Sophy is quite in raptures with him. I fear the Dean will find a rival in his nephew! he staid not many minutes in the room, but taking a book again, went into the garden.

I fancy he is strangely insensible, but remember, the more difficult the enterprise, the more glorious the victory. I despise your waxen hearts that melt before the flame of every bright eye they meet,

“ — They

“ ——— They melt,

“ But melt like ice, soon harder froze.”

I leave them without regret, to the misses of the present generation, whose bosoms are fired with a passion for indiscriminate admiration. My eagle genius aspires to a noble quarry—to animate the frozen bosom of insensibility! to subdue the haughty spirit that bears the yoke with generous indignation! to drive ambition from the panting breast, and fix a gentle passion in its place! This would indeed be glorious! Henrietta; is it not in compassion to mankind, that the thrice gentle Lady Harriot immures me in this desert.

A summons to read a sermon to the gentry below, stops me in the height of my career. My conscience reproaches me with having written so much nonsense on a Sunday. If the Dean were to see this epistle, what a vile heretic would he pronounce me. O, but I forgot to tell you, he engaged us to spend the day with him to-morrow—and then—Henrietta!

Monday

Monday evening.

I have made a fatal discovery, which has blasted all my hopes! at two, we set out for Firdale, I looked enchantingly—and Aunt Sophy, (who, I have already hinted, has an intention of disputing the conquest of this stranger with me) appeared wonderfully inviting in her black lace hood and tent-stitch gown, lined with cherry coloured silk; which last article of finery, was undoubtedly rescued from the oblivious obscurity in which it has lain involved these ten years past, and once more introduced to the chearful light of heaven, by way of prepossessing her intended lover with the most favourable ideas of the greatness of her ingenuity, and the elegance of her taste. When her rival is in question, you know a little malice is very natural.

“But such an antiquated rival, Delia.”

Why, child, her age may be the circumstance that renders her most formidable: she has a handsome fortune at her own disposal, and cannot in the common course

course of nature, live many years. Besides, I fancy there is something very irresistible about many old ladies; and though the envy of the young ones may prevent their discerning it, the gentlemen are more susceptible of their merit, and often do justice to it; for, in my opinion, when an old woman is so infatuated as to marry a young man, he renders her strict justice, when he spends her fortune, and breaks her heart.

On our arrival at Firdale, we found the Dean so well, as to be able to receive us in the drawing-room—but no parson made his appearance. “How mortifying this,” thought I, “but when I get the varlet entwisted in my snares, he shall suffer tenfold vengeance!”

Just before we were called to dinner, he became visible, lured from his den, I suppose, by the ascending odours of the savoury meats. These insensible animals are always voracious!

Was it his presence that inspired me with unusual cheerfulness! every bosom seemed

seemed to catch my gaiety; he too appeared animated with a desire to amuse, and joined in the conversation with great affability. Never, my dear Henrietta, since your departure from Bloomfield, have I passed so agreeable a day. Our parson has a charming voice and great judgement. We sung duets, but they were all in the allegro strain. "Hence loathed melancholy." When we were summoned to drink coffee, he very gallantly took my hand to lead me, and I observed after we entered the room, that he still held it; to admire it's whiteness and delicacy, as my foolish vanity suggested it; but, judge my chagrin, when on turning towards him, I beheld him attentively examining your picture, which I had inadvertently put on as a bracelet; surely no girl intent on conquest, ever wore so injudicious an ornament! I withdrew my hand in violent displeasure! he sat down and looked extremely thoughtful. Henrietta, not till that instant did I recollect that your parson's name was Wentworth!

he

he it is, the very identical Wentworth, who so captivated you at Lady N—'s! there is something mysterious in all this; not a word did I hear of your intended visit to Bloomfield, till after your interview with this little—help me to an epithet—I am half inclined to be scurrilous and call names! no wonder, foiled and disappointed as I have been. Yes, it appears but too plainly, that you are already on terms. The poor Dean is wonderfully indebted to his nephew for his company—to entomb himself alive with an old gouty, querulous man in the depth of winter! and this too from no motives, but the antiquated ones of duty and compassion! very probable, truly. O how I admire such saints!

And you too, my sweet obliging Henrietta! to exchange the delightful bustle of the town—the enchanting variety of brilliant assemblies—crowded theatres—perfumed beaux—fluttering belles and the never-ending diversity of pleasures which the life of a fine lady affords. To forego
all

all these—to suffer a voluntary exile in this now dreary retreat! a retreat deprived of every chearful ray, but that which the smile of friendly love diffuses through its gloom. Ah no, the sacrifice was too great to be offered at the shrine of friendship. Love asserts his prerogative, and marks the victim as his own.

When the tea-table was removed, the Dean proposed a party at whist. I declined playing, and *your* parson, mine, alas! no longer, followed my example. The four antients placed themselves at the card-table, and Wentworth and I retired to the fire-side. This was as it ought to be. I felt myself inclined to be very talkative, nor did I restrain my volubility! I had a most convenient hearer—he assented to every thing I said, but still kept his eyes fixed on the picture. I spitefully drew on my glove. Deprived of their favourite object, his eyes were now at liberty; they beam with a sweetness and animation I have seldom seen equalled. Henrietta, I half forgive the deceit you have practised. I
could

could stake my life, he opened his lips at least a dozen times, to enquire about the picture and its original, but that troublesome thing, called modesty, as often sealed them up again. I penetrated his sentiments, and resolving to keep the poor monster no longer in suspense, I pulled off my glove, and taking my little rival from my arm, "From the attention with which you examine this portrait," said "I, I fancy, Mr. Wentworth, you are not unacquainted with the original; the lady who sat for it, is my most intimate friend."

"Is it possible," cried he, taking the picture from my hand, "is Henrietta Willmore, your friend?"

A lively blush suffused his face as he spoke.

You see, Henrietta, you must have made no slight impression, when on only one interview, he so perfectly recollected your features. "You are caught already, friend," thought I, "and my efforts will be unavailing."

Meantime he examined the picture, the likeness, he acknowledged was striking, but the countenance was not sufficiently animated. I was on the point of telling him, that the painter who would satisfy a lover, must copy from a Venus; but reflecting that a hint of this nature, might be rather premature, I wisely listened in silence; do you not admire my discretion? "Yet," continued he, after a pause, "it is
" unjust to censure the artist for not imi-
" tating graces, which are inimitable."

My aunt, who sat with her back to us, on hearing your name, turned and asked Mr. Wentworth, if he was acquainted with you; he replied, he had seen you.

"Then let me tell you, Mr. Went-
" worth, you have seen one of the wor-
" thiest young women in Ireland; to say
" nothing of her person, for of that every
" one can be a judge; yet how many
" girls in her situation, would be proud
" of parading such a figure, in every
" public place; but though she has been
" brought up, as I may say, in the lap
" of

“ of vanity and extravagance, she is humble and unassuming, and will, I am certain, make an excellent housewife. It is true, she is little indebted to her mother’s example, Lady Willmore, poor woman !”

“ Every one, my dear sister,” interrupted my grandmother, with that benevolence which so strongly tinctures every word she utters, “ every one, like Lady Willmore, has some favourite foible.”

“ My aunt, Madam,” replied I, “ means only to place my Henrietta’s virtues in the fairest light, by shewing how few advantages she received from education.”

“ Your aunt’s motives,” replied she, “ are always good-natured, but your Henrietta needs no foil; nor if she did, would she wish to find one in her mother.”

The old gentleman now began to expatiate on your sublime perfections; and for half an hour, your praises were reverberated from the four corners of the whist

table, while he sat with his mouth, ears and eyes extended to their utmost limits, to catch the enchanting accents.

“What,” cried I! impatient at the impertinence of the conversation, “are you never to have done? I believe, you will be tempted to pay her divine honours, and I expect ere long, to be hold a pagoda, dedicated to her divinityship!”

“If your friend,” replied Wentworth, “be such as she is represented, the excellence of the object of our worship, will half absolve idolatry from guilt.”

And now, Henrietta, if your soul is liberal enough to prefer love and a cottage with Wentworth, to a Duke and ambition, hasten your return to Bloomfield. I have been enquiring into the state of your swain’s finances, and though they are not at present, in a very flourishing condition, his future prospects are more promising. The Dean is to make him his heir, and he admires you so violently, that you have no opposition to fear from that quarter;

quarter ; or if the old gentleman were inclined to prove refractory, Aunt Sophy's influence would ensure his consent. Perhaps you fancy me in jest all this time ; if you do, I assure you, you are greatly mistaken. You ridicule the idea of love at first sight. Now, though I am by no means an advocate for those sudden passions, of which we have such numerous instances in plays and novels, nor can possibly conceive that a permanent attachment, can be the consequence of an instantaneous impression ; I do yet believe, that even on a first interview, a mind of much sensibility may be exceedingly captivated. How irresistible is a beautiful form, when animated by a soul still more lovely ! but the feelings I speak of, are widely dissimilar from that admiration of beauty, which the vicious feel as forcibly as the virtuous : it is the sympathy of a noble and elegant mind on the recognition of a soul of congenial excellence.

Interrupted is my learned dissertation by the dinner bell ! in this old fashioned mansion, every thing moves by clock-work, except

Your's,

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER VIII.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

DO not misconceive me, my dear Delia, when I acknowledge I received great satisfaction from your letter ; it was satisfaction entirely abstracted from all selfish views ; on *your* account I rejoice that you have got so agreeable an addition to your little society, and am pleased that you agree with me in your approbation of Wentworth.

I own,

I own, I should have taken your whimsical epistle entirely in jest, were it not for the seriousness of the latter part. Indeed, my dear, you are as fanciful as my mother, and it is the same partial fondness which misleads you both.

Perhaps ere this, you have experienced the justice of your observation on love at first sight; for it seems to me, not improbable, that Delia appeared more attractive in the eyes of Wentworth, than Henrietta, even allowing the latter some little superiority in point of external form; for the air, the voice, the countenance, the manners, speak a language, infinitely more interesting to the feelings, than a dazzling complexion, or a symmetry of features. I wish my conjectures may be right. Wentworth, seems formed to your taste, and you must be agreeable to his; nor would his want of fortune be an objection with you, who have sufficient to exalt the man you find worthy of your hand, to a state of independence and affluence. But it is by no means improbable,

D 4

bable, that the heart which we are so politely and so generously complimenting each other with, may be, meantime, entirely devoted to some unknown princess! for I believe young men of much sensibility, seldom arrive at his years, without forming some attachment of the tender kind. However, as a friend at least, his presence will contribute to render your solitude less tiresome.

Lady Harriot, I suppose, has informed you of her son's arrival. Lord Archer is really an elegant young man, and resembles his mother extremely. His fine black eyes have all the fire that animates hers with a peculiar expression of vivacity and penetration. His manners possess the ease which distinguishes the man of fashion, and his conversation is lively, sensible, and unconstrained; though not, I think, devoid of a little tincture of satire; but it is of that species, which being entirely exempt from the severity of ill-nature, is far from creating either disgust or apprehension.

The

The visits with which the Duke still honours us, give rise to a thousand disquieting apprehensions. I begin to fear my mother's conjectures are not without foundation. If his future conduct should justify my fears, how can I—how ought I to act? To follow the dictates of my own inclinations and reject his addresses, I really believe would put a period to my mother's existence! Pray heaven I may be spared the trial. Grandeur and ambition no longer captivate my wishes, my soul has experienced their futility and sighs for the calm serenity of domestic life. The glittering scenes in which I have been engaged against my inclinations and my judgment, have inspired me with an aversion for parade and vanity, and this disgust has been heightened by the ruinous effects they have produced on my mother's disposition and circumstances.

Mr. Stanhope is returned from the Continent, he visited us yesterday, but was very coldly received by my mother. If I am not deceived, he still retains the favourable

vourable sentiments he once avowedly entertained of me. I almost repent my rejection of a man whose conduct evinced him so worthy of esteem; but in that affair, you know, I was entirely influenced by my mother; and indeed I am well convinced, her only objection to Mr. Stanhope was, his want of a title. You know me too well to imagine me capable of being influenced by such a motive, though my disinclination to change a situation, which was at that time but too happy, induced me to acquiesce in her determination with pleasure; but my circumstances are so greatly altered since that period, that were he now inclined to renew his addresses, I never could so greatly subdue my spirit, as to receive in adversity the hand of a man, who in more prosperous days had been rejected, and by my mother, with some degree of scorn. Perhaps I am too proud—in time my mind may acquire humility, and learn to conform itself to the lowliness of my fortunes—but the lesson is too difficult to be attained
on

on a sudden. Every day seems to add to the distresses of my situation. Oh that I could fly to Bloomfield, and lose those painful remembrances in the society of the dear circle, I so unwillingly quitted! but what encreases my chagrin is, the apprehension that my mother will not suffer me to enjoy this pleasure—a pleasure on which I had so fondly fixed my wishes.

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

LETTER IX.

Lady Harriot Bloomfield to Lady Wharton.

MY son is arrived, my dear sister, and if the partiality of a mother does not deceive me, a more accomplished young nobleman shines not in the brilliant circle of the British court! yet I fear his course

of life abroad, has been extremely dissipated—but reflection and maturer years will naturally lead to more rational pursuits.

Oh Maria! if the splendid hopes I have cherished of his future fortunes, should now be frustrated! if the glittering fabric I have endeavoured to raise, with such unremitting vigilance—such unwearied attention, should now fall to the ground!—and how unstable is the foundation which at present supports it? the whims of a headstrong youth! the caprices of a girl! but every thing has hitherto succeeded to my wishes; from the past, then, let me draw a favourable presage of the future.

Delia is at present disengaged; her heart has at length overcome that unfortunate attachment, which to me was productive of so much anxiety and pain. A soul of the least sensibility, must be charmed with the graces of her person—the sweetness of her temper—the innocent gaiety of her manners—the fineness of her understanding, and the goodness of her heart—and
sure

sure no female breast, undefended by a prior possession, could return the affection of such a man as Archer, with indifference. I have engaged him, though he expressed infinite reluctance, to attend me next week to Bloomfield. I have represented Delia as a plain country-girl, and his surprise at finding her so amiable and accomplished, will place her perfections in a fairer light for brilliant descriptions, exaggerated by the ardour of a youthful imagination, excite expectations too sanguine to be gratified by human perfection; and we frequently find ourselves displeased and disappointed with objects that might have been the source of peculiar delight, if they had been represented in less glowing colours.

Henrietta Willmore, I believe, will accompany us to Bloomfield. I own I was somewhat apprehensive of the effect of her beauty, but Archer beheld it with all the indifference I could wish; and if I be not greatly deceived in his character,

Delia's

Delia's temper and manners are more adapted to his taste.

How much have I suffered before I could bring affairs, even to this juncture; but how much more shall I undergo ere they can arrive at the so much wished for crisis! A perpetual anxiety, a trembling solicitude hangs continually about my heart, and depresses my spirits! my slumbers are broken by disquieting apprehensions. I rise from my pillow a stranger to the soft repose that crowns the rest of unsuspecting innocence. The prospect of Bloomfield's immediate return from America, gives me infinite uneasiness. Should they meet—should they come to an éclaircissement—should Delia discover the artifices by which they were separated—how would my flattering hopes be blasted in an instant! shame, disappointment and contempt would be the fruits of my painful efforts! yet as the most generous minds are ever most open to deceit, I might still, perhaps, impose upon Delia's credulity; and availing myself of the ascendancy

cendency I have gained over her affections, notwithstanding appearances, still induce her to believe me innocent.

Nor can I, Maria, think I have done her an injury, in preventing her from uniting herself to a man, who, notwithstanding appearances, might have proved extremely unworthy of her tenderness. Fatal experience has taught me the emptiness of those visionary schemes of felicity, those bright delusions which enchant the romantic mind! Contrary to the inclinations, nay in direct opposition to the advice of my friends, I conferred my hand and fortune on a man, who, though he appeared to my blind partiality the most deserving and honourable, evinced himself the most unworthy and perfidious of his sex.—Abandoned by a husband I adored, forsaken for a wretch who possessed no charm but that of superior wickedness to recommend her—how many years did I languish in obscurity—a widowed wife in the bloom of youth and beauty! a just indignation it is true, enabled me to conquer an ill placed

placed tenderness, and to reject with disdain an offer of re-union with an ingrate who had betrayed my affection and squandered my fortune in profusion and vice.

Shunning and shunned by mankind, all my views and affections were concentrated in my son, and to his education I entirely devoted my time. I impressed on his mind that principle of obedience, which is the first sentiment a judicious preceptor will inculcate. To enforce the influence of instruction, children must be taught to reverence the person who offers it. They observe our actions with a scrutiny of which we are little aware, and when they perceive us subject to the same passions and caprices as themselves, the veneration which is requisite to give weight to every precept is too soon exchanged for disobedience, and contempt. But children must be taught to love as well as to fear; reproof must be blended with tenderness, and correction tempered with lenity. Gentleness, supported by a proper degree of resolution, is the most effectual way of acquiring

quiring an ascendancy over the passions of others. Base and servile souls may crouch beneath the bitterness of reproach and the harshness of severity, but in more noble natures they excite a spirit of opposition not easily allayed. The generality of women, I have often remarked, appear strangely unconscious of the advantages they might in this respect derive from the softness and flexibility which are the most distinguishing characteristics of the sex; but nothing is so prejudicial to the female interest, as the perverse and contradictory humour which is so frequently prevalent. A seeming acquiescence with the sentiments of others, is the almost infallible method of leading them in the end to adopt our own.

When my husband's death had rendered my circumstances more easy, and that I had sent my son to compleat his studies at Oxford—when you with difficulty drew me from my solitude, you know I had frequent opportunities of marrying to advantage; but disgusted as I was with mankind,

mankind, I rejected them without hesitation. Mr. Bloomfield would have shared the fate of his rivals, had you not so strongly represented to me the happy effects, of which his alliance might be productive in respect to the future fortunes of my son. Entirely indifferent to Mr. Bloomfield's person, to remain unmarried, would have been infinitely more agreeable to my inclinations, but every consideration was sacrificed to maternal tenderness. My son, meantime, had formed a connection which threatened to destroy my schemes for his advancement. You know with what difficulty I weaned him from this attachment. I laid aside the authority of a parent, and expostulated with the gentleness of a friend. I wept—I entreated—but he remained fixed in his determination, till as my last and most prevailing argument, I acquainted him with my intention of accepting Mr. Bloomfield's proposal, which enabled me to assign to him my jointure of seven hundred a year. "I need not," continued I "point out to you
" the

“ the motives which incite me to this step ;
“ they are sufficiently obvious. You may
“ now with more propriety pursue the
“ dictates of your inclinations—your ob-
“ stinacy, it is true, may break a heart
“ whose tenderness it could not conquer !”

Overcome by this generosity, he threw himself on his knees before me and promised an entire submission to my will : yet when I beheld his emotions—when I saw him raise his streaming eyes to heaven and deprecate its wrath, as he wrote his last adieu to Miss Sackville ; I was on the point of relinquishing my flattering views and consenting to his wishes ! but a moment's reflection on my past life restored me to my senses. “ Shall the complaints
“ of a love-sick boy,” said I, “ over-
“ come my fortitude ! such were once my
“ feelings, when the hand of friendship
“ endeavoured to pluck from my breast
“ that fatal passion which was the bitter
“ source of so much anguish and dis-
“ quietude !”

Warm

Warm in my imagination, romantic in my sentiments, I entered the world with that contempt of riches so natural to young and generous minds; to those, especially, who have never known the want of them; for like most other blessings, we are unconscious of their value, until after we have lost them. When by my own imprudence I found myself reduced to indigence and obscurity, I experienced the justice of this observation. The respect and attention with which I had hitherto been treated, I now found to be entirely dependent on the fortune of which my own folly had deprived me; and whilst my pride was wounded by a discovery so mortifying, my mind was imprest with a conviction of the importance of wealth, and a resolution of acquiring it, if possible, for a son to whom all my tenderness was now transferred. You pointed out an union with Mr. Bloomfield, as a means of gratifying my warmest expectations; yet had I foreseen the obstacles that impeded my designs, believe me, Maria, I should
never

never have embarked in them. Delia's attachment to Bloomfield, was then unknown to me; a short residence in the family discovered it, but I considered it as one of those childish fancies which fade from the memory and scarcely leave a trace behind; and I falsely flattered myself that her mind was too volatile to retain a lasting impression. When the soul is engrossed by one favourite project, difficulties serve only to encrease the ardour of our pursuit.

When Bloomfield returned to Scotland, to finish his studies, by intercepting his letters to Delia, I easily convinced her of his falshood and prevailed on her to accompany me to France.

Bloomfield, on receiving no answers to his letters, left Scotland abruptly and returned to Ireland to satisfy his doubts. Our journey to France appeared a sufficient confirmation; in a transport of jealous rage he purchased a commission in a regiment, which was then embarking for America, and departed in a week.

This

This was beyond my most sanguine hopes—yet how little satisfaction did I derive from the success of my artifices! Delia's pride and delicacy enabled her at first to support Bloomfield's fancied inconstancy with firmness; but I soon discovered through the veil of this affected composure, a heart bleeding with anguish. Yet she uttered no complaints—she declined no party of pleasure, I proposed for her amusement; a superficial observer might have been deceived, but her lost vivacity and the sickly langour that took possession of her countenance soon avowed her latent discontent. Alarmed and terrified at an indisposition which I too justly attributed to myself, I watched over her declining health with an anxiety more than maternal. My bosom was agitated with the most distracting apprehensions and the keenest remorse. Had it been possible to have restored Bloomfield to her wishes, without exposing myself to abhorrence and contempt, I would have renounced my flattering views with pleasure. Oh Maria, how intricate
are

are the mazes of deceit! entangled as I was, I found it impossible to recede, and when I looked forward, horror and desolation presented themselves to my view! Delia, meantime, appeared serene and tranquil. I had always loved her character, but now I revered it. She sustained the infirmities of her constitution, and the anguish of her mind with a kind of plaintive dignity of uncomplaining resignation, which affected me more deeply than the bitterest lamentations. She perceived my distress and solicitude with the most lively gratitude, and when she has pressed my hands to her lips, and bathed them in tears of tenderness, I have flung myself beside her in unutterable agony, and wept like the savage Hyena over the victim of my cruelty.

But why this recapitulation of my sufferings! why does my memory recall those painful retrospects! Time and her native air have restored to Delia her health and serenity—and though she no longer retains
her

her natural excessive vivacity, her temper is still sprightly and playful.

You, Maria, are the only confidante of the secret conflicts of my soul—in pouring them into your friendly bosom, I find a melancholy satisfaction.

I shall write to you from Bloomfield, my dear sister.

Adieu!

HARRIOT BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER X.

Lord Archer to Lord Revell.

Dublin.

YOUR prognostics in respect to the weather were perfectly right, we had a fair wind, and my voyage would have been a pleasant one, if I could have divested myself of the regret with which I contemplated the Gallic shore as it slowly receded from my view.

In

In a few hours we beheld the chalky cliffs of Albion—but I felt no filial transports as I approached the land of my forefathers. Had I been permitted to remain in it, however, my mortification would have been supportable; but you know the residence of my mother's consort is in Dublin, and it was necessary that I should join her there.

Lady Harriot received me with inexpressible delight; she imagines my return was entirely influenced by motives of duty, and I suffered her to remain in the pleasing error, though if my fortune had been more adequate to my necessities, I fear the calls of duty would have been heard in vain.

My mother still looks young and handsome, and the good man her husband has erected her into an oracle, whose sage advices he makes the rule of his conduct, and the guide of every action. He treats me with particular attention, and promises me his interest at Court. Yet, though I am not in circumstances to be over nice, I

scorn to mingle with the corrupt and venal herd of parasites who hover there like crows around a carrion. Neither, indeed, would I accept of any employment which would oblige me to reside in this kingdom. The *amor patriæ* seems to be an instinctive principle, and Ireland can offer me no inducement so powerful as to stifle its impulses.

This city is greatly improved since I last visited it, and the isle of saints appears to be metamorphosed into a land of warriors. You will expect me to say something of public entertainments; but let it suffice to tell you that I have found none—and as for private circles, cards constitute the eternal business of the old, and dancing is the prevailing passion of the young. Dancing, indeed, is reduced to a science which is studied by all ranks, ages, and denominations. The children, fathers, mothers, aunts, ~~uncles~~, and grandmothers all learn together and compose one motley cotillon. Every winter new modes are introduced by some French *laquais*,

laquais, or disbanded fidler from the Opera House, and our veteran pupils receive their lessons with the same docility and practise them with unwearied assiduity, until they dance into that oblivion on whose verge they totter!

The genius of this people appears to bear a striking resemblance to that of the French. The same love of pleasure—the same pride and almost the same vanity prevails in both. I wish I could carry the resemblance still farther and observe in the Irish the frugality which regulates the œconomy of the French. But here the chain seems broken, though we may again trace a similitude in the gaiety of their tempers and the courtesy of their manners. They are an amiable, hospitable and agreeable people, but blindfolded by pride, corrupted by luxury and enslaved by dissipation. Yet when I see the numberless edifices that are consecrated to the most benevolent purposes. When I meet the numerous train of orphans and widows who have been “visited in their affliction.”

When I cast my eye over the records of public humanity and beneficence, and consider the indigence of the people whose compassion has produced such extraordinary exertions! every disadvantageous impression fades from my mind, and my fancy represents the figure of charity hovering on guardian wings around this city, and extending her veil over its follies and its crimes!

Adieu,

ARCHER.

LETTER XI.

Lord Archer to Lord Revell.

DEAR Revell, why do you not write to me? already I find my situation sufficiently irksome; add not then to my mortification the melancholy apprehension of being forgotten by my friends—of being doubly exiled from their presence and from their affections!

I find

I find this city insupportably stupid! yet were I at liberty to return to Paris—my total ruin must be the consequence of such a step; for you know my extravagance has already contributed to encumber an estate which had been previously so heavily loaded by my father's debts.

You will suggest to me the expedient which is generally the resource of persons in a similar situation, and advise me to try a matrimonial scheme like other ruined noblemen. No—Revell, though I do not aspire to any singular sanctity of morals, I can never submit to the meanness of endeavouring to cheat a woman in a legal way of her fortune and repose. The robber, who, in open defiance of the laws of his country, demands your money on the highway, appears to me in a point of view more honourable and honest than the villain, who, screening himself beneath their shadow, preys without remorse on the innocent and unwary, and aggravates his guilt by the basest ingratitude. I should be that villain, Revell, were I with this

view to endeavour to ensnare an unsuspecting female heart without inclination or ability to give my own in return! for though I am at present entirely unattached to any particular object, the pursuits and amusements which for some years past have engaged my attention, co-operating with an early disappointment, have erased from my mind that native sensibility—those finer sensations which dispose the youthful heart to receive and cherish the most fascinating of all passions!

Revell, I look back with regret to the treasure I have lost—the gem I have thrown away, like an idiot unconscious of its value! after having steeped my senses in excess and dissipation, when remorse, disquietude, satiety, the sure attendants of unlawful pleasure—assume their empire in my breast—the gentle form of my Louisa rises to my imagination! her humid eyes, beaming with reproachful tenderness, seem to enquire in silent language “why she
“ was abandoned!” she recalls to my view those happy hours when youthful innocence,

cence, native vivacity and artless affection gave a relish to every amusement and rendered the most trifling delightful! had she consented to a private union, my fortune, then unimpaired by extravagance, had been sufficient to support us in affluence, though not in splendour. Whilst our children prattled around us, ours had been the delightful and honourable task of leading their inexperienced steps in the paths of virtue, and impressing fair and ingenuous sentiments on their yielding minds! Revell, my mother's mistaken policy has undone me! yet why do I accuse her? Was it not her duty as a parent to dissuade her child from a step which she considered as prejudicial to his interest? let me throw the blame where it is more justly due—on my own irresolution!

How must Louisa's gentle spirit have suffered by my desertion! yet her feelings, however poignant and severe they may have been, were soft and gentle compared to the pangs which tortured this apostate

bosom; for the sorrows of the innocent
and elevated mind

—— “ Whilst they *sink*—exalt,
“ And conscious virtue mitigates the pang.”

The spirit and sense which so peculiarly distinguished her, enabled her to drive an unworthy object from her heart, and to bestow her hand on a man whose generous affection merited the inestimable gift.

I know you will laugh at this sententious epistle—and in truth I begin to suspect I have made myself somewhat ridiculous in writing in this strain to a fellow of your principles. You must not, however, expose me to the fraternity—and as to your own private opinion, I do not imagine I shall suffer much in it. For notwithstanding the levity, not to say profligacy of your conduct, a few rays of sense and good-nature will sometimes break through the clouds which obscure them, and are discernible amidst a thousand errors: but instead of being fixed and steady lights to guide you in the right way—they resemble
the

the wild meteors of the night, and serve only to render your intellectual "darkness visible."

Well ! how go on our *beaux esprits* ? all fire and frolic as usual, I suppose. How many have precipitated themselves to the Elysian shades since my departure ? though I fear they stand a better chance of sounding the deep abyss of gloomy Tartarus ! do they ever enquire for their absent brother ? do they even regret his exile ? But why do I ask ! amusement is the goddess of their idolatry ! they have no time to devote to the impertinent interruptions of friendship ! yet how ardently do I wish to return to them ! surely their society possesses a charm like that attributed to the rattle-snake, which is said to fascinate the animal it is going to devour.

My time hangs heavily on my hands. I know not how to dispose of it. My spirits seem infected by the gloomy atmosphere of this kingdom. Next week I am to attend my mother in a visit she makes to a daughter of Mr. Bloomfield's, by a former

wife, who resides with her grandfather in the county of Wicklow, some thirty miles hence. I shall be introduced to some curious groupe, I suppose. I entreated her to give orders that *Miss* might be brought to town to spare us the trouble of this disagreeable expedition; or at least to defer it a few months longer—but she remained fixed in her determination, and I could not with decency refuse to accompany her.

I have been introduced to a very fine girl since my arrival, to Henrietta Willmore. I beheld this young lady with sensations similar to those with which I contemplated the Venus de Medicis—that model of perfection, which, however, the fair Henrietta does not in the least resemble. Certain it is, the ancients and moderns differ extremely in their ideas of beauty.

But what prepossesses me more in Henrietta Willmore's favour, than the personal attractions she so eminently possesses, is her entire exemption from the conceit and
vanity

vanity which render the conversation of those women who fancy themselves beauties so peculiarly insipid and disgusting. Indeed the dowager, her mother, enjoys a superabundant proportion of those fashionable qualities, and is perpetually wounding the delicacy of her lovely daughter. The latter is to accompany us in our excursion—and her society will conduce to render it more tolerable.

Adieu, my next shall be from Bloomfield, the name of the family mansion, where doubtless I shall find much leisure for writing and very few subjects.

ARCHER.

LETTER XII.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

MR. STANHOPE, who since his arrival has doubtless been informed of the distresses of our situation, has renewed his generous proposals, which have been rejected by my mother with even more hauteur than formerly. I was not even consulted on the occasion, and was informed of this circumstance by accident. Her caution was unnecessary, for though I always esteemed Mr. Stanhope, and would have received his addresses if they had been authorized by her approbation, the reasons mentioned in my last still influence my mind too strongly to allow me to accept them at present.

I am interrupted by my mother.

Delia,

Delia, when you read the enclosed, you may form some idea of the misery of your friend!

To Lady Willmore.

“ The generous esteem with which your
“ ladyship honours me, induces me to
“ throw off the disguise which has hitherto
“ concealed my sentiments, and reveal
“ them without reserve to your view.

“ The laws of delicacy, perhaps would
“ impose a longer silence—but the neces-
“ sity which obliges me to swerve from
“ its dictates, will plead my excuse.

“ Your penetration, Madam, must ere
“ this, have discovered my attachment to
“ your lovely daughter—though when I
“ have reflected on the disparity of our
“ years and some other unpropitious cir-
“ cumstances, I have been astonished at
“ the presumption of my wishes, and have
“ frequently left her presence covered with
“ confusion! but they are novices in love
“ who fancy it is to be combated by rea-
“ son! an irresistible charm attracted me
“ to

“ to your house, and every interview con-
“ tributed to confirm an attachment, which,
“ as it is received or rejected, will consti-
“ tute the misery or felicity of my future
“ life!

“ Business of the utmost importance
“ obliges me to leave Dublin for some
“ weeks; and this circumstance has pre-
“ cipitated a confession which it was my
“ intention to have delayed much longer.
“ By endeavouring to evince myself wor-
“ thy of her friendship, I hoped to in-
“ terest your amiable Henrietta in my fa-
“ vour, and incline her to listen with less
“ reluctance to the subject next my heart.

“ And now, Madam, that I have put
“ my cause into your hands, I would wish
“ you to plead it as an advocate, not to
“ decide it as a judge. The least con-
“ straint on Henrietta Willmore's incli-
“ nations would render me even more mi-
“ serable than her hate; and it is a con-
“ viction of the tenderness and delicacy
“ of your ladyship's maternal sentiments
“ that influences me to address you on
“ this

“ this important occasion. If you find
“ her unalterably averse from my alliance,
“ urge her, I entreat you, no further on
“ the subject. Suffer her at least to re-
“ tain some esteem for the man who would
“ sacrifice the world to inspire her with
“ more tender sentiments !

“ I am, Madam,

“ Your ladyship’s

“ most devoted servant,

“ B——.”

This letter which has involved me in the deepest affliction, almost deprived my mother of her reason.

“ Do not flatter yourself, madam,” said I, “ that I can ever consent to your wishes. Though I feel the warmest gratitude for his Grace’s generous partiality in my favour, my sentiments are widely different from those I ought to experience for the person to whom I shall connect myself in the most sacred of all human engagements. As a friend I can esteem
“ him

“ him — I can venerate him as a parent—but as a husband I can never love him.”

She gazed at me with a countenance expressive of sorrow and astonishment.

“ Is it possible,” said she, “ that you can be so blind to your happiness and interest! but if you have no regard to your own advantage, reflect on the situation to which your obstinacy will subject me. Must I exchange the flattering prospects which this wished event has opened to my view for those gloomy scenes of poverty and despair, which must be the unavoidable consequences of your refusal! speak not of retiring to contented obscurity—the wrecks of our fortune are scarcely sufficient to satisfy our creditors—and can you, to gratify a romantic delicacy, behold an indulgent parent perish with want!”

The argument was irresistible—I could answer it only with my tears! Delia, I submit to the fate against which it is in vain to struggle—yet what crime have I

com-

committed that merits so severe a punishment? Why was I deprived in my tender youth of a father who would have been my guide and my protector—why abandoned to the conduct of a mother—but what would I say! oh my friend, I presume not to arraign the dispensations of Providence, but my soul is deeply wounded!

I have always detested the meanness and indelicacy of marrying from interested motives, but circumstanced as I am can I act otherwise? Can I behold the person to whom I owe my being exposed to the extremities of want, or subsisting on the precarious bounty of strangers! yet how can I consent to an union against which my honour and my inclinations so strongly revolt—an union which will separate me from my native country—from my friends—from my Delia! but how powerful is the voice of filial piety. When I turn to the distresses to which my refusal will reduce my mother, every partial consideration vanishes from my mind—the motives at least shall sanctify the action—and whatever
may

may be my disquietudes, the consciousness of having acted uprightly will soften and alleviate them. But I fear my own irresolution—at this instant then, when duty triumphs in my breast, let me fly to my mother and assure her of my consent to her wishes, if my reluctant heart will give me leave.

I found Lady Harriot and Lord Archer with my mother. I have not yet acquainted her with my determination. Something may intervene. The Duke expects not an answer to his letter.—Our affairs may not be so desperate as she imagines; surely if but a decent competence remained, duty would not exact a sacrifice so severe; “hope” springs eternal in the human breast!—deprived of her gentle consolations how wretched were mankind.

Lady Harriot showed me the letter* in

* It does not appear.

— which

which you so warmly entreated her to prevail on my mother to permit me to accompany her to Bloomfield. Lord Archer very earnestly joined Lady Harriot in this request, and my mother, willing to sooth me into a compliance with her own wishes, has consented to theirs; yet this indulgence has given me but little satisfaction. My Delia's sympathetic heart will be infected by my sorrow, and I shall bring care and disquietude to the bosom which I have been accustomed to inspire with pleasure and delight.

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

LET.

L E T T E R X I I I .

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

I Have this instant received your letter !
you must not, my Henrietta, consent
to an union with the Duke—a messenger
waits for this—I shall explain when I have
time, my motives for this request, which
you will render me wretched, by re-
fusing !

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LET-

L E T T E R X I V .

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

W H E N you acknowledge yourself unhappy, you cannot surely be so ungenerous as to refuse your Delia the rapture of extricating you at once out of all your difficulties! fortune has been partial in the distribution of her favours—suffer me then to atone for her deficiencies, and do not let her gifts be less dear to you because they flow from the source of friendship. You know the extent of my fortune and the situation of my heart; for though I generally forbear to make declarations which are justly considered as ridiculous, I feel that it will never form another union; and I look forward without regret to a state of life, which, if it confers less pleasure than the wedded one, is at least less subject to sorrow and disquietude; and to glide serenely

renely down the stream of life is now the height of my ambition. I have no taste for expensive gratifications, and can no otherwise enjoy the riches with which the lavish bounty of heaven has blessed me than by sharing them with my friends. And though the distresses of your situation have frequently awakened the tenderest sympathy in my bosom, the certainty of being one day able to restore the tranquility of your mind, and unfold more pleasing prospects to your view, banished each gloomy idea, and animated my breast with the liveliest satisfaction. But if influenced by a false refinement, you should now reject the efforts of my friendship, believe me, Henrietta, it would wound my soul more deeply than even your death could do; as it would convince me of a want of tenderness, and a narrowness of sentiment, of which at present I think you are incapable.

I had just dispatched the note I wrote to you this morning, when my aunt entered my closet and found me in tears. I made

no

no scruple of revealing to her the cause of my uneasiness. Your distressed situation, even though you had not been our Henrietta, was enough to have interested her in your affairs; for you know her generous and affectionate nature. After a pause of some moments, she said she knew the steps which my affection for a friend so dear to me would induce me to take, but that as I was not of age, I had no claim to dispose of my own fortune—hers, she said, as I was conscious, she had always intended for me; and entreated me to take whatever sum I thought adequate to the present emergency, and use it as liberally as if it were already my own.

Convinced as I already was of the generosity of her soul, I was penetrated by this new instance of tenderness with the most lively gratitude. I threw my arms around her and wept on her bosom.

Four thousand pounds is the sum which my aunt has allotted to your use—but as the idea of an obligation would hurt your mother, whose sentiments in this respect,
are

are less liberal than my Henrietta's, this affair must be settled by means of our friend Mr. Stewart, whose terms she has so absolutely rejected. However, as we understand he offered the full value of your estate, my aunt has entrusted him with our little secret, and written to him to renew the treaty, empowering him to make the additional offer of two thousand pounds, and an annuity of one hundred to be paid during the life of your mother. Surely she cannot be so infatuated to reject proposals apparently so advantageous. The other two thousand pounds, you, my dear, must dispose of as you think proper.

Next week, I propose to myself, the pleasure of embracing you, at Bloomfield. Your presence will call up the idea of joy and rapture in my breast—for I shall see you once more happy. Oh my Henrietta, how I compassionate those dull unfeeling natures which are insensible to the charms of mutual affection! but do not, when we meet, oppress my aunt with acknowledgements—acknowledgements which are rather
a tacit

a tacit reproach to the generality of mankind, than a compliment to the person they are addressed to. What can you say, but that she has sacrificed a little sordid dross, which to her was entirely useless, to rescue one of the persons on earth most dear to her—from eternal disquietude? Let us then bury this subject in oblivion, and remember, my friend, that the heart which feels it an indignity to receive a benefit would be narrow to confer one, unless from selfish motives.

I am greatly pleased with your description of Lord Archer—indeed my affection for his mother already induces me to consider him as if he were more than nominally my brother.

Wentworth is my constant companion—they all compliment me on my conquest—but do not be alarmed, Henrietta—I assure *you* he is as insensible to my charms as you can possibly desire. We walked by moonlight two hours last night, and what think you was the subject of our conversation? my charming friend to be sure.

I expatiated with uncommon eloquence on the rational domestic turn of your mind—on your fondness for rural life—on your expertness in feeding poultry—hatching chickens—making bacon—brewing, baking, spinning, &c. &c. &c. qualifications which are indispensably necessary in the wife of a country parson. Now, my dear, you must acknowledge that I have flattered your abilities a little—however, as I should be unwilling to give Wentworth reason to suspect my veracity, when you come here you must put yourself under Aunt Sophy's tuition, who is an adept in these affairs, and endeavour to acquire the various qualifications which are requisite to constitute a good house-wife. Wentworth is quite a novice in matters of this nature, and how dreadful will it be, if neither of you possess judgment enough to discover whether your tythe pigs are fat or lean! Consider the impositions to which such ignorance will subject you, and endeavour to avoid them by a timely application of your talents to that abstruse, difficult and complicated

plicated science, good house-wifery. But I fear I shall terrify you, and to avoid a situation so mortifying to your vanity, you will give your hand to the Duke. Nor could I censure such a resolution. What girl of spirit would not prefer a nobleman of such elevated rank, even though he be a little in the antique order, to a petty country parson with his tythe pigs and poultry. But ah! Henrietta, the latter will be the victim of your pride! his pathetic discourses may melt the hearts of his congregation—but what will they avail him if they cannot soften yours! in vain may riches flow in on him from all quarters in profusion—his cabbages and coleworts may flourish luxuriantly—his geese and hens and pigs may encrease and multiply around him in vain!

——— “ Nor smokiest ham,

“ Nor fattest turkey without thee is sweet!”

But come—let your heart be its own umpire, and I fancy my friend Wentworth will have no reason to repine at its decision.

Speak not of an unknown princess—it is a chimera of your own imagination; I have a strong presentiment, nay a thorough persuasion, that no such bugbear exists. We shall every where find scarecrows to terrify us from the fruits of felicity! let us not then dress them up for ourselves! surely a temper too sanguine is infinitely preferable to the contrary extreme—a mind of this cast will snatch some moments of happiness amidst the sorrows of the world, whilst the other, by melancholy anticipation, throws a still heavier gloom over prospects, already, heaven knows, too dark!

What a joyous circle shall we be! suppose we conclude the winter with a triple alliance. Wentworth and you shall lead off the matrimonial dance—then the Dean and Aunt Sophy shall *figure in*, if his reverence's gout will permit him—and if Lord Archer possesses the least gallantry, he will offer to be my partner. Would to heaven we could prevail on the Duke to take your lady mother by the hand, and make it quadruple! He is a glorious old veteran
(in

(in the service of Cupid, I mean) and it were a thousand pities to let him be out of the family. In what state should we march to the temple of Hymen (I dignify our parish church with that appellation) with the maidens of the village strewing crocuses and ivy-berries, wintry honours, admirably adapted to the years of some of the votaries! To heighten the scene, the ground shall be covered with snow, glittering icicles shall depend from each leafless bough, and our reverend lovers shall hobble along with all the gaiety of sixteen, singing, like the frozen Icelanders in King Arthur——
“ ’Tis love—’tis love—’tis love that has
“ warmed us.”

I admire the Duke, and shall be tempted to change partners with your mother. How convenient would it be, Henrietta, if we could transfer our swains, as readily as our other goods and chattels, to our necessitous acquaintances! but our sex labours under many disadvantages, and the want of a power like this is no trifling one.

Answer this epistle personally, your letters put me in the vapours, of late; and as we are so soon to meet, it will be unnecessary to write.

Adieu,

Your ever faithful,

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER XV.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

YOU bid me be silent, but can I repress the effusions of a grateful heart! yet how unavailing are words where language is so very inadequate to my feelings. Why, my Delia, am I astonished at this new instance of generosity in a mind with which I have been so long and intimately acquainted! had you deviated from
the

the elevation of sentiment which so strongly marks your character, surprise would indeed have been natural.

But you have been too generous—though I do not reject your bounty, I cannot accept of it in its fullest extent. Mr. Stewart has not yet renewed his proposals—write to him—desire him instead of two thousand to offer one—my mother will receive the overture with pleasure; and that sum, added to the little remnant of our fortune, will be more than sufficient to support us in that sphere, in which I am determined to move for the future.

Believe me, this new obligation does not oppress me. Your Henrietta's, is not the proud and selfish spirit which scorns the gentle offices of affection. In your friendship, you conferred on me a gift more precious than the "gold of Ophir." Humanity may induce us to share our fortunes with the distressed—but friendship is a tribute which can only be exacted by virtue. How nobly has your aunt acted! how ungrateful have I been to murmur at the dis-

penfations of that Providence, which has given me fuch friends !

I have promifed my mother, that if, after our debts are paid, there remains not fufficient to maintain us with decency, I fhall no longer oppofe her inclinations. She appeared perfectly fatisfied with thefe conditions, and thinks ſhe has now effected the purpoſe next her heart. I cannot forbear feeling for her difappointment. I am now very buſy settling our family accounts, and have already diſpoſed of all my jewels and the greateſt part of our plate, and other “ antient moſt domeſtic ornaments.” This is the moſt agreeable employment I have long been engaged in. Some time ago it would have been greatly the reverſe, but the diſquietude I have ſuffered for ſome time paſt would make any change appear pleaſing—and to me no diſtreſs—no ſervility can equal that of being eternally expoſed to the insolence of importunate creditors, and obliged to ſubmit to the meanness of framing excuſes to delay the payment of their juſt demands.

Oh

Oh! my friend, from what a state of wretchedness have you snatched me—but I dare not indulge my pen—nor need I—you know the grateful heart of

Your

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

LETTER XVI.

Lord Archer to Lord Revell.

Bloomfield, Dec. 23d.

Twelve at Night.

HERE I sit, Revell, forlorn and solitary as the midnight raven that croaks at the window of this dismal apartment! the massy walls are hung with tapestry in which are enwoven the memoirs of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—though I fancy the infernal monarch condescended

to fit for the picture of his majesty ; and Mother Shipton, if there be such a personage, lent her phyzz for the southern beauty's. And in this curious rookery—oh how unlike the “ gay saloons and “ golden vested halls,” in which we were wont to celebrate our midnight vigils ! in this rookery am I bestowed by the extraordinary kindness of Mrs. Sophia Bloomfield, spinster, whom I shall, ere long, introduce to your Lordship's acquaintance. Here the good lady observed, that my rest would be less liable to be interrupted by the storms so frequent at this wintry season, than in any of the more modern apartments — an advantage, which, she imagined, would atone for its want of elegance and entitle it to a preference. I acquiesced in these weighty reasons and suffered myself to be conducted hither without opposition. The winds whistling through the naked branches, the murmurs of the river which flows beneath my windows, the solemn croaking of the ravens, and the sentimental hooting of the owls, might

might in some *fair* breast inspire a tender melancholy,

“ And lull to rest the visionary maid ;”

but to me they are productive of a dissimilar effect, and repel, instead of inviting the approaches of the downy God.

I should have described the inhabitants rather than the habitation ; but present objects most forcibly engage the attention. Sir Richard and Lady Bloomfield are as venerable and as old-fashioned as the mansion they inhabit. The above-mentioned Mrs. Sophia Bloomfield, sister to Sir Richard, is a little, old, dry, maiden lady, with a smirking countenance and a large fortune. Delia Bloomfield, whom I expected to find an aukward, hoydening “ romp-loving miss,” must next pass in review before you.

Her person and manners are elegantly graceful, and her face, though inferior in beauty to her friend, Henrietta Willmore, extremely captivating. An innocent archness, blended with an amiable vivacity,

F 6

sparkles

sparkles in her eyes; she has the voice of a Syren, and her beautiful hair, which in defiance of fashion she suffers to retain its native hue, brought these lines to my remembrance.

“ As o’er her white forehead the gilt tresses flow,
“ Like the rays of the sun on a hillock of snow,
“ Thus the painters of old drew the queen of the fair,
“ ’Tis the taste of the antients—’tis classical hair.”

In fine, my sister, as she permits me to call her, is a very enchanting creature; and were it possible for you to undergo a total renovation of morals, I should have no objection to you for a brother-in-law. But I fear you must make a descent to purgatory ere you can aspire to this Eden. Telemachus went to hell to seek an old father; Orpheus, which is yet more astonishing, to recover a wife? Would you do less for a mistress? some other illustrious heroes of antiquity have trod the same path, and a beaten one they found it! and doubtless many of these of later ages have followed

lowed their footsteps, though they may have been less fortunate in exploring a passage out again. However, if you were here, I fancy you would be tempted to conceive an extravagant passion for Delia Bloomfield. For her mother's fortune, which is thirty thousand pounds, has been settled on her, and she will be of age in a year, although she looks scarcely more than seventeen. She is besides, apparently the heiress of all the family estates and possessions, which are very considerable.

This good family received me with great hospitality. They all seem fond of my mother, but Delia appears more particularly attached to her. This is an uncommon circumstance, and plainly evinces the goodness of both their hearts.

We spent the evening not disagreeably. The girls play and sing delightfully, and Delia Bloomfield has a charming piano. We went to supper at ten, precisely, their hour all the year round, as I understand; and at eleven, just as we began to grow social and sprightly, we were warned by a
bell

bell to retire to our respective apartments : how disgusting is this formality ? I felt a strong inclination to steal down again to the girls, who, I observed, staid below after us, to repeat their secrets, I suppose ; for they are violent friends, and criticise me ; for doubtless ere this, my person, dress, manners and conversation have undergone a complete analysis.

This solitude must of necessity grow horridly tiresome. How long the mistress of my destiny, Lady Harriot, I *mean*, intends to keep me insconced in this enchanted castle, I know not ; but of this I am assured, that if it be more than a week, I shall grow very refractory.

I grow sleepy, adieu.

ARCHER.

LET.

LETTER XVII.

From the Same to the Same.

Bloomfield.

COULD you have believed it, Revell; I have been here a fortnight already, and have consented to stay another. These fascinating gypsies grow every hour more charming! I find it impossible to refuse them any request; like another Hercules I shall wield the distaff! but which shall be my Omphale? Delia, I suppose, for there is a young parson amongst us, who, if I am not greatly deceived, is in a fair way of preaching himself into Henrietta's good graces. How the girl can be so infatuated as to prefer a rusty cassock to an embroidered suit, I cannot conceive. But she is one of those unfashionable females, who pretend that the intrinsic merit of the man is not to be estimated by his external appear-

appearance. His reverence, it is true, is more sufferable than gentlemen of his profession usually are. His knowledge has not been confined to books; he has seen the world, and a very good understanding has enabled him to profit by this advantage without being infected with its vices. The sacred habit, when supported with dignity, is of all others the most respectable and becoming; but how few who assume it, find the happy method of reconciling wisdom and simplicity with gaiety and elegance, and sanctity of manners with freedom of conversation. I promise myself much pleasure in his friendship. His breast seems open to every manly and generous sentiment—we have also another divine, uncle to Wentworth, an old Dean “upon two sticks” and a dozen yards of flannel about his feet—somewhat perverse and dogmatical it must be confessed, but good-natured and sensible notwithstanding. He has a very pretty seat two miles from hence, where he often entertains us with great hospitality.

Sir

Sir Richard, who is a man of sense and learning, possesses a large and valuable collection of books in the antient and modern languages. These at all times afford an agreeable entertainment—but I seldom require their assistance, except when I read to the girls, which I sometimes do for hours together whilst they sit at work. But if Wentworth is with us, he generally deprives me of one of my auditors. He and Henrietta engage in a serious, sentimental conversation—the old gentlemen dispute about politics or play at back-gammon—the old ladies employ themselves in the manner they like best—and Delia and I laugh, play, sing and talk nonsense alternately; whilst Lady Harriot sits smiling and casts significant glances at Wentworth and Henrietta.

If they should take it into their wise heads to fall seriously in love with each other, the consequences might not be very agreeable, for Wentworth has but a small fortune, and Henrietta none—owing to the extravagance of her lady-mother, who
has

has ingeniously contrived to dissipate a noble property in a very few years—an art in which the inhabitants of this kingdom, as well male as female, are generally extremely expert.

We sometimes amuse ourselves with hunting hares and foxes—and Wentworth and I frequently spend whole days in fowling.

This country is, as you have heard, most beautifully picturesque, and every where exhibits a variety of enchanting landscapes. We return at night, and, like the heroes of old, lay the trophies of our victories at the feet of our mistresses, who generally consign them to the cook, and whilst they are preparing for our refreshment, we entertain ourselves with music or conversation; and not unfrequently with dancing to the harmonious sound of the bagpipes, played in concert with a fiddle, not of the Cremona kind, and sometimes our band is compleated by a drum borrowed from a neighbouring puppet-show.

I shall

I shall expose myself to your ridicule, when I acknowledge, that the manner in which we spend our time, is to me, very amusing. But is it not that greatest charm of our existence, variety, that recommends it? It is true, the inhabitants of this calm retreat are strangers to those tumultuous pleasures, which, though they at first exhilarate the spirits, serve only to exhaust and depress them in the end; but the more rational delights of friendship and reason are theirs—the smiles of approving conscience and the pleasures of benevolence!

Again you smile at the new proselyte.—Allow me at least to reverence the virtue from whose precepts I have too frequently deviated.

I never saw two hearts more tenderly united than Delia's and Henrietta's. It is a maxim with many of our sex, that female friendship, like platonic love, is an ideal form; a maxim as illiberal as it is unjust. That women are frequently capricious in their friendship is an incontrovertible truth. But are men exempted from this fault?
and

and perhaps if we examine the secret springs of human actions minutely, we may deduce this seeming caprice from some of the most amiable propensities of the human heart.

The principle which excites us to cultivate each others friendship—that most endearing tie in the chain of social life—is always most prevalent in generous spirits; at a season particularly, ere a view of the follies and vices of mankind, and the disappointments and disquietudes of which they are naturally productive, blunt the edge of that sensibility, and extinguish that warmth of affection, which irresistibly impel the youthful mind to lavish its tenderness without precaution on the first object that appears to merit it. The romantic imagination adorns its favourite with every ideal charm, and then adores the offspring of its own creation. Time may dispel the enchantment and shew the object in its native colours; but experience is not the growth of a moment, nor is suspicion, which frequently supplies its place, the inmate of a noble bosom. The mind will
again

again give ear to the flattering suggestions of hope—to the dream of self-delusion! till soured by repeated disappointments, it too frequently contracts that cynical and unsocial temper, which is, of all others, the most displeasing. But when this first unexhausted tenderness of the soul meets an ingenuous breast that returns it with congenial fervour, it produces that lovely affection, that sweet effusion of the mind, which inspired the imagination of the poet, when wrapt in enthusiastic admiration, he exclaims,

———— “ Is aught so fair,
 “ In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
 “ In the bright eye of Hesper, or the morn,
 “ In nature’s fairest forms is aught so fair,
 “ As virtuous friendship !”

Akerside

Were I not acquainted with the thoughtlessness of your temper, your silence would render me extremely uneasy; six weeks have now elapsed since our separation and not a single line have I received. Yet I will not suspect the constancy of your affection: if I am in a delusion, it is of a
 nature

nature too pleasing to be voluntarily renounced.

ARCHER.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Lord Revell to Lord Archer.

Paris.

I Deny the assertion of the sage who avers
“there is nothing new under the sun.”
Surely your unprecedented metamorphosis
may justly lay claim to novelty. “Gra-
“cious heaven,” I exclaim, when I look
over your letters, “did these moral, phi-
“losophical, sentimental productions fall
“from the pen of the gallant, gay Lord
“Archer!” Is the air you breath conta-
gious?—or is it that your mind partakes
of

of the nature of the cameleon, and reflects the hues of the surrounding objects?

This simile is by no means adequate to yours of the rattle-snake. The fraternity is infinitely indebted to you for that brilliant conceit. I feel at this instant the justice of your comparison. But you are now happily beyond the sphere of its attraction, would to heaven I were in the same predicament! This monster far surpasses the rest of its destructive species, whilst they are moderately contented with birds and vermin, this with insatiable voraciousness devours whole lands and tenements, and marks its progress with ruin and desolation! my elegant villa at R—— with its adjoining grounds have already been its prey; and my groves in Suffex, beauteous as those which lent their shade to our primeval parents! must next become its victims. This hand has signed their sentence already, perhaps the fatal axe has finished their destruction! already the weeping Hamadryades lament their “ fate devoted trees !”

But

But pray, my Lord, which is the fault most natural and most excuseable in youth, to consecrate that vernal season of the soul to gay festivity and social pleasure—or waste it in the gothic gloom of sloth and inactivity? yet into this last and most fatal extreme are you in danger of degenerating? Can the admired Lord Archer—the model of elegance even to the French nobility—the avowed favourite of the illustrious and beautiful Marchioness de Montpensier—contentedly immure himself in an obscure corner of an obscure island, with a set of obscure parsons—country girls—maiden aunts and grandmothers?

Love and ambition are the most powerful springs which actuate the mind of man; you have disclaimed the influence of the former, it is to the latter then, that we are to attribute your metamorphosis. It is this brightest emanation of the noble mind—this

“ —glorious fault of angels and of Gods” —

which animates your bosom whilst you
employ

employ your hours in transcribing recipes from the family receipt-book at the request of your purblind goddess, or thread needles for your wrinkled Omphale, whilst she darns her comfortable woollen stockings.

You will ask me, “ why I have devoted
“ you to the aunt rather than to the niece,
“ of whom you have given a representa-
“ tion so amiable ?”

Why—as you have promised me your interest with the younger Bloomfield (on conditions, however, which, as I feel no inclination to anticipate my destiny, I shall not agree to) I naturally conclude that the elder possesses the still larger fortune—for who, without some very prevailing inducement, would hang his affections, like wreaths of roses on a withered yew, when a blooming myrtle stood ready to receive them.

But seriously, Archer, you should devise some expedient for repairing the breaches which your father’s excesses and your own, have made in your fortune. If Mr. Bloomfield has interest, suffer him to exert it in your favour, and do not,

through a ridiculous punctilio, let your genius and abilities lie buried in oblivion.

It is easy to declaim pompously on the vanity of wealth, and even to learn to despise it in speculation. Who, to read Seneca, could imagine that the philosopher lived surrounded by the splendour of an Imperial court—who could conceive that a genius so elevated as his, could be enslaved by those riches of whose insignificance he appeared so conscious?

If we throw back our views, indeed, to the remoter ages of antiquity—if we contemplate the Roman Republic in its meridian lustre, we shall behold glorious instances of voluntary poverty. But, if you will allow me the expression, it was then the *mode*. The ideas of shame and ignominy were not then, as now, annexed to it—it was illustrious! Human virtue depends on contingencies, on the temperament of the body—on the education we receive—on the age in which we live, and the manners and sentiments prevalent in it, and had the glorious turnep-roaster of antiquity

tiquity, so admired by succeeding generations, received his existence in this golden age of ours, perhaps he would have feasted as luxuriously, and brawled as loudly for a pension to support his voluptuousness as ever a patriot of them all.

Riches, whilst they throw a veil over the deformity of vice, heighten the charms of virtue and enlarge her sphere of action. Without riches what is virtue, but a tree without fruit. What avails it to mankind that your bosom is animated by benevolence, or glows with the flame of charity, when damped by the chilling hand of poverty, the noble fires must burn in secret in your breast? Is it not equally the maxim of religion and philosophy, that the life which is most useful to man must be most pleasing to God! but how be useful without the necessary means? and though your excessive delicacy may be startled at the mode of procuring those means, your consecrating them to benevolent purposes, will sanctify the methods by which they were acquired. In conclusion let me exhort

you, my dear friend, to get riches and be happy.

REVELL.

L E T T E R X I X .

Lord Archer to Lord Revell.

SURELY, Revell, there is enchantment in all around me, for I could never be so infatuated as to remain in this solitude for five long weeks with patience, nay even with pleasure, unless under the dominion of some powerful spell. Speak not of the fascinating influence of love, I have renounced the worship of the capricious tyrant, and though Delia is the loveliest of her lovely sex, I behold her with indifference. Not to admire her, indeed, would bespeak a brutal insensibility; but love and admiration are different passions.

“ When wit and sense like hers agree,

“ One may be pleased and yet be free.”

I am

I am charmed with the spirit of her conversation, with the sweet artlessness of her manners, but above all with the generous fervor of her attachments. How amiable is her tenderness and attention to her reverend parents ! how engaging the gentleness with which she sacrifices her own inclinations when they interfere with the pleasure or convenience of her friends ! No one ever possessed a more liberal way of thinking, a soul more entirely divested of all selfish views. Lady Harriot seems to feel for this bewitching girl, even more than the partiality of a mother. We sometimes converse together for hours, at night, after the rest of the family is at rest, and Delia's virtues and perfections supply her with themes, on which she expatiates with inexpressible delight.

Henrietta too, the beautiful Henrietta ! these lovely friends counteract without intending it, each others influence in my heart. I am in love with both or with neither. Waller was not more divided between Amoret and Sacharissa.

" Joy salutes me when I set
 " My blest eyes on Amoret ;
 " But with wonder I am struck,
 " When I on her rival look !"

This tranquil retirement has restored the bloom of health to Henrietta's cheek. I almost fancy I behold a celestial form when I gaze on her ! methinks her waving curls diffuse ambrosial fragrance, and I tremble lest bright clouds descend " and " snatch the lovely vision from my view." Less beautiful than her friend it must be acknowledged, but not less captivating, Delia's most powerful attractions, are derived from the sweet intelligence of an amiable mind that shines in each expressive feature, and in her Syren voice there is a charm that takes

" The prisoned soul
 " And laps it in elysium ———."

I fear you will imagine that I am stalking on heroic stilts through the regions of fancy, and that my fair companions, like the *bourii* that embellish the paradise of
 Ma-

Mahomet, are imaginary beings. I wish it were in my power to give you ocular demonstration of their existence, by introducing you to our little society. Indeed I am convinced that were you amongst us, you would become a convert to virtue, though love might perhaps claim the glory of the miracle.

Poor Wentworth ! I never saw a fellow more deeply enamoured ! He has no reason to despair, however, for if I possess the least skill in augury, the goddess of his idolatry will not disdain the incense he offers on her shrine. " Love in a Cottage," and with a girl who has been accustomed from her infancy to splendour and dissipation—a dangerous experiment ! but to give advice is not my business, nor would it avail in the least if it were ; it is an unwelcome present to most, but to offer it to persons in love, would be to " cast pearls before swine ;" I was going to say, until I reflected, that the dignified passion is capable of exalting the brute into the man, instead of degrading the man into the brute.

Delia appears enraptured with their growing attachment. "It gratified the warmest wish of her heart," she told me when I remarked it to her. Romantic girl! how astonishingly sanguine is inexperienced youth!

I have this instant received your epistle; "Get riches and be happy," a most philosophical maxim, it must be allowed, and worthy to be ranked with those of Rochefoucault. But if your Lordship be so very sensible of the importance of wealth, why do you so obstinately persist in exhausting your own? Are you not, like Seneca and a thousand others of the human race, a lively instance of the contradiction that subsists between the speculation and the practice of mankind, between their sentiments and their actions?

Behold a concise translation of the sense of your letter.

"Arise, my friend, shake off this lethargy

“ thargy of virtue ! Go into the world,
“ unite yourself with that unfeeling band,
“ who, whilst they basely prostrate them-
“ selves before the shrine of power—ex-
“ ercise in their turn the tyranny they are
“ made to suffer—and depress the weak
“ and defenceless with the most cruel ex-
“ actions. But you are partial to your
“ fellow citizens—you love your country,
“ and why ? because it had the honour of
“ giving you being ! A citizen of the world
“ should divest himself of such ignoble
“ prejudices !—Sell it then to the best ad-
“ vantage ; break the bonds of society—
“ trample on the sacred laws of order—
“ and, as the ultimate reward of those
“ Herculean labours—erect yourself into
“ a *golden calf*, for the multitude of fools
“ and knaves to bow down before and
“ worship !”

But will not the wise and virtuous, like
the faithful Israelites in the wilderness,
turn with scorn and aversion from the abo-
minable idolatry ?

Riches have in you a powerful advocate. Shall I take the opposite side of the argument and plead the cause of poverty?

Riches may be compared to a magnet, but poverty is a touchstone. The flattering parasite, like the fiend when touched by the spear of Ithuriel, lets fall the mask of dissimulation at her approach, and shrinks into his native deformity; whilst the true friend, deriving new lustre from her presence, appears in the light of those celestial beings, who, invested in a human form, were sent on errands full of love and mercy to mankind—to animate the fortitude—assuage the sufferings, or protect and sanctify the dwellings of the just.

“What is virtue without riches, but a tree without fruit!”

Is virtue, then, that famed Hesperian plant which can produce no fruit but golden ones? Believe me, my good friend, if virtue had possessed such a property, she would never have sunk into the despised, neglected thing she is at present. On the contrary,

contrary, she would have been the favourite idol of mankind, and monarchs would have contended for the glory of becoming her guardian dragon. To the maxim you have perverted to your purpose, I oppose the divine precept which expressly enjoins us "not to do evil, that good may come of it."

If your casuistry affords you no new weapons sufficiently forcible to combat these objections to your scheme, it will at least supply you with a variety of evasions. You will tell me that like most other commentators, I have mistaken the text, and given it an interpretation which never entered into any but my own blundering imagination :

" You'll dazzle, puzzle, flutter, raise a dust,

" Then fly conviction in the dust you raise."

ARCHER.

G 6

LET-

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ARCHER.

G 6

LET.

L E T T E R XX.

Lord Archer to Lord Revell.

February 12th.

OUR party is broken up—Henrietta has been obliged to leave us—her mother is extremely ill—it provokes me, that a cause so unworthy, should occasion this amiable girl so much affliction. I should not be sorry to hear the good lady was gathered to her progenitors. Sanguine, indeed, were the hope of amendment in a mind abandoned at her years to dissipation, vanity and extravagance! Lady Harriot and I were to accompany Henrietta Willmore—but as Delia appeared quite inconsolable for our departure, and could not accompany us to town, on account of Sir Richard's being at present confined with the gout, I changed my determination and offered to stay here another fortnight,

fortnight, if Lady Harriot would dispense with my attendance—which, pleased with my attention to her favourite, she very readily consented to.

Indeed though we have lost a very agreeable part of our society, and that poor Wentworth droops like a forsaken swain, it is still more pleasing than any I could hope to find elsewhere; air and exercise have given me an unusual flow of spirits, and Delia too, has resumed her vivacity, which at first was greatly clouded by the distress and departure of her beloved friend.

She often engages in the most amusing contests with our Dean, who is one of the greatest oddities that was ever cloistered in a college. He has but lately retired from the University, of which he was a senior fellow—and a long and intimate connection with this family, induced him to prefer a living in their neighbourhood, to a more beneficial establishment. Passionately fond of argument, yet impatient of contradiction—prolix and pompous in his declamations, but enraged at the slightest interruption—

terruption—Delia, with an arch seriousness, enters into the dispute, and when he has collected his whole stock of rhetoric to refute her arguments, by some quick transition, or whimsical allusion, she throws an air of ridicule on the subject, which, at once puts him past patience and provokes him to treat her with the most sovereign contempt.

I met her this morning flying out of the parlour.

“The Dean and I have quarrelled,” cried she, laughing, “go and endeavour to appease his ire.”

I found him sitting in an easy chair, his head was thrown so backwards, that his wig seemed in danger of falling off—his hands were extended on the arms of the chair, and one knee was flung over the other, which he jogged with great violence.

“No!” cried he, after a pause of some moments—“No! there exists not beneath the canopy of heaven, a creature so provoking!—Wretches, who have the misfortune to be idiots, are justly entitled

“to

“ to our commiseration ! but in a rational
“ creature—nay, a creature possessed of an
“ understanding so comprehensive—a me-
“ mory so tenacious—a sagacity so pene-
“ trating—how inconsistent is this taste
“ for follies !”

“ You know, Sir,” said I, “ your fa-
“ vourite poet pronounces woman in her
“ most perfect state to be

“ At best a contradiction still.”

“ True,” replied he, “ and she is the
“ most contradictory of her unaccountable
“ sex ! Even at the moment that she dis-
“ tracts me with her levity, and stuns me
“ with her volubility, I know not which
“ most, to despise or admire her—such
“ astonishing quickness of apprehension !
“ such amazing facility of expression !—
“ and yet—after all, ’tis a folly to be dis-
“ pleased—’tis nature that speaks in her—
“ and nature will predominate. If we
“ play with a kitten, shall we beat it for
“ scratching our fingers—it is precisely the
“ same case ! Poor child ! I fear I have
“ rebuked

“ rebuked her with too much asperity—
“ my smitten conscience recalls to my re-
“ collection her kindness to me during my
“ tedious confinement here last autumn;
“ with what tenderness did she attend me,
“ with what sweetness and gentleness did
“ she submit to the infirmities of my tem-
“ per! Would she not even deprive her-
“ self of the necessary refreshment of
“ slumber, and when my excruciating tor-
“ ments banished repose from my pillow,
“ sit reading to me half the night. Had
“ she been the child of my bosom, she
“ could not have attended me with more
“ filial solicitude. Poor child! and have
“ I reviled thee for only indulging the in-
“ nocent playfulness of thy disposition.—
“ I, who have so often tormented thee
“ with the complainings of pain, the re-
“ pinings of melancholy, and the pee-
“ vishness of age!”

Just then, as he sat lost in reflections, doubtless, on his own ingratitude, I saw Delia pass the window and beckoned her in. She was with us in an instant. The
Dean

Dean when he saw her, forced a smile and held out his hand ; she flew to him.

“ Can you so soon forgive my harshness, Delia ?”—

“ My dear Sir,” cried she, “ talk not of forgiveness, if you can pardon my folly, surely I have no reason to resent reproofs, which I acknowledge I have merited.”

“ No, child, you merited no reproof—the fault was entirely my own ; and yet distrust not my sincerity, when I assure you, that notwithstanding the petulant severity with which I too frequently treat you, I love you more tenderly than any woman upon earth !”

“ Hush ! hush ! dear Sir,” cried she, with affected terror — “ if Aunt Sophy hears you, she’ll tear my eyes out !”

“ Again at your absurdities,” cried the Dean, knitting his brows—

“ Oh my dear Dean,” replied she, with an air of vivacity, throwing her arms around him as she spoke, “ you must not look thus austerely on your poor Delia !

“ consider

“ consider the offence is involuntary—in-
“ deed to think before I speak, is a degree
“ of discretion I can seldom attain to!”

How amiable did she appear at that moment!

“ She looked like blooming spring when young charms
“ Wind round her hoary fire’s reluctant arms;
“ And with a frolic, infantine embrace,
“ Banish the rugged frown from winter’s face?”

“ Sweet girl!” cried the Dean, kissing
her cheek, “ why was I not blessed with
“ such a daughter?”

“ Probably because you never married,”
returned she, with her usual animation.
“ Did you expect to work miracles, to
“ animate a mass of earth like Prome-
“ theus?—or like Jupiter, produce a Mi-
“ nerva, from your brain?”

“ That, child,” replied the Dean, “ is
“ an allegorical figure adopted by the an-
“ tient poets, to insinuate, that wisdom
“ proceedeth from the brain of Jove, as
“ from its fountain head.”

“ Then I am sorry he made no better
“ use of it—he was a vile debauchee.”

“ Alas,”

“ Alas,” replied the Dean, with a deep sigh, “ had not Solomon, that wisest of all
“ mortals, seven hundred wives and three
“ hundred concubines!—a terrible—yet a
“ useful example! since it impresses on
“ our minds the degeneracy of our na-
“ tures, and teaches us the insufficiency
“ of human wisdom.”

“ Then, my dear Dean, since the wisest
“ of all mortals was obliged to acknow-
“ ledge that ‘ all is vanity and vexation
‘ of spirit,’ “ and that you allow human
“ wisdom to be of so little consequence,
“ why are you perpetually at war with my
“ folly?”

“ Child,” replied the Dean, with an embarrassed air, “ because it is disgrace-
“ ful to a being endued with rationality.”

“ And does wisdom, then transform
“ her votaries into the semblance of her
“ emblematic owl?—are dulness and so-
“ lemnity synonymous with wisdom? Vol-
“ taire says—“ Il faut toujours rire, par-
“ ceque cela est bon pour la santé.”

To

“ To stalk with tragic dignity along
“ the path of life may be very good for
“ those, whose constitutions it agrees
“ with ; but though to stop on our way
“ to pick flowers and chase butterflies—
“ or sometimes to laugh at the grotesque
“ figures we meet, may be childish amuse-
“ ments — what matter if they shorten
“ the tediousness of the journey, and ena-
“ ble our spirits to support the burden of
“ vexation and sorrow which the destinies
“ are generally so obliging as to clap on
“ our shoulders ?”

“ Your perceptions,” replied the Dean,
“ are infinitely too rapid, and you would
“ do well to endeavour to restrain their
“ velocity. I never inferred, that wisdom
“ and dulness were synonymous. Wisdom,
“ on the contrary, is a vivifying princi-
“ ple, and, notwithstanding the deviations
“ of some of her votaries, a lovely and
“ venerable form. Nor was it a censure-
“ able idolatry, if in ages unenlightened
“ by the spirit of the gospel, the greatest
“ and most illustrious of mankind pro-
“ strated

“strated themselves before this glorious
“luminary of the moral world, like the
“antient nations who adored the Al-
“mighty, in the brightest of his sensible
“images!”

“If virtue were inseparably connected
“with wisdom,” replied Delia, “I too
“should *bow down before her and worship*
“*her*. But when I consider her as a beau-
“tiful phantom, which, without correc-
“ting the heart or restraining the passions,
“evaporates in high sounding language
“and vain speculation, I feel a stronger
“temptation to laugh at the idolatry than
“to join it.”

“And yet,” said the Dean, “doth not
“even sacred writ inform us, that wisdom
“is justified of her children?”

“Not surely of her son Solomon, any
“more than of her father Jupiter!

“But will you make no distinction be-
“tween this pagan wisdom, and that
“which cometh from above, and is the
“perfection of every grace and virtue?”

Just

Just as he paused for a reply, a servant from Sir Richard, came to request his company.

“ There is some justice in your last observation,” said he, addressing himself to Delia, “ but your reason is choaked and over-run with error, and the too luxuriant ramifications of your fancy form a kind of umbrage, which renders it impervious to the light of truth. I am sorry I have not at present leisure to investigate this subject—at some more convenient season I shall endeavour to elucidate it—for I regard the instruction of the ignorant as a principal branch of my duty.”

“ Oh !” cried Delia, as soon as he had left the room, “ how I am rejoiced at my deliverance ! I was summoning my whole stock of patience, to enable me to support an elaborate dissertation, which I saw him collecting materials to furnish us with, and I had determined to listen with all possible meekness and humility. Indeed, I sometimes reproach
“ myself

“ myself for teasing him, but how can I
“ avoid it. He knows not how to make
“ the least allowance for female levity—
“ and would have me utter nothing but
“ solemn maxims, and sententious saws,
“ like himself.”

But though Delia may sometimes suffer herself to be carried away by her vivacity, you are not to conceive her to be one of those formidable females, who indulge themselves in an unrestrained volubility. No—her feelings are quick, and she expresses them with energy ;—but she can listen as well as speak ; a silent woman is an unnatural animal, and to a person of a true taste, what is unnatural can never be pleasing ! yet its opposite is still worse ;—and no monster ever issued from the sandy deserts of Arabia, which I should shun with a more instinctive antipathy than one of those female orators, whose tongues vibrate with a perpetual motion !

Adieu,

ARCHER.

L E T.

L E T T E R X X I.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

ONCE more I am doomed to repine at the perverseness of my destiny, and deplore the sad necessity that separates me from my Henrietta! yet my sorrow is not partial—I feel much more on your account than on my own.

Indeed the good sense and vivacity of my amiable new brother's conversation, would often steal my thoughts from this displeasing subject, were it not brought continually to my remembrance, by the rueful physiognomy of my other companion; it is true, I sometimes feel a tendency to risibility whilst I contemplate it; and surely thus to extract good out of evil, by deriving consolation from the misfortunes of our friends, is undoubtedly wise.

Poor

Poor Wentworth! If a doubt of the reality of his affection for you, had still remained in my mind, it would be dispelled by his present distress, and the unavailing efforts he makes to conceal it. Yet with our antients, who are not possessed of all the penetration in the world—he succeeds; but we moderns are more quick-sighted—Lord Archer laughs to see this noble spirit struggling in his toils—and seems to triumph in his own liberty.

I dread the time when I shall be reduced to the society of this poor discontented swain, who appears to be no more than the ghost of the once gay and animated Wentworth. When Lord Archer leaves us, I suppose I shall again be obliged to have recourse to the Dean and Aunt Sophy for amusement—for from his little reverence none is to be expected. You have stolen away the vital flame that illumined the machine, and nothing now remains but a gross material clod, like the moon in eclipse—or, (if you will allow me to use a simile,

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less elevated indeed, but more pithy and expressive), a lanthorn without a candle!

Lord Archer is to write to me when he leaves us—as a brother he requested my correspondence—as a sister I granted it.

Farewell, my dearest friend! Let me conjure you to exert the native vigour of your mind, and not suffer it to be depressed by your present uneasiness.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER XXII.

Lord Archer to Delia Bloomfield.

I Remember the morning I departed, my amiable sister observing the sun shone with a splendor unusual at this dreary season, opened the sash and sent out her favourite red-breast, to partake the genial warmth

warmth diffused through the atmosphere by his cheering influence. The little warbler seemed delighted with its release, and was quickly out of sight. But ere an hour had elapsed the wanderer returned, and fluttering its wings and beating its breast against the casement, appeared impatient to resume its chains; and evinced by a thousand expressive gestures that it thought so soft a bondage preferable even to liberty. Thus shall I soon return to the retreat, which, unlike the red-breast, I quitted with reluctance; though I dare not indulge the flattering idea of being, like him, received with smiles and endearments!

I went to the Theatre the evening of my arrival in Dublin—but whether it was that the actors were really very indifferent, or that my taste has been perverted by the more animated gestures of the French performers, I derived but little entertainment from the representation.

Last night I was at a masked ball, given by Lady E——. The Irish, I think, do not consult their genius when they en-

courage this species of amusement. To carry it on with spirit requires greater vivacity than they generally possess. Its novelty may please for a time—but the eye will soon ^{grow} tire of the same images perpetually recurring; and as there is a deficiency of the wit and spirit which in some cities of Europe render it a mental entertainment, satiety must shortly succeed. Some of the dresses were elegantly fancied, and a few of the characters well supported. I had the honour of dancing cotillons with no less a personage than the Paphian deity, who, adorned by the rosy fingered graces in her most celestial airs, in honour to the entertainment, had descended from the star-crowned summit of Olympus. But you may imagine my surprize, when on unmasking at supper, I perceived that not even the Gods themselves are exempt from the all-subdueing power of time, who had cruelly despoiled my heavenly partner of those divine attractions—radiance of beauty and ethereal graces—which the animated pencil of the Grecian bard has represented
in

in colours bright and lasting as his fame !
The Graces sickened at the view—the doves
expanded their varying pinions—and the
little loves, inspired with filial awe by
her reverend appearance, dropt on their
knees and entreated her blessing ! Yet even
before the delusion was dissolved, the mag-
nificent decorations of the rooms, neither
the charms of harmony, nor the brilliant
assemblage of both sexes which surrounded
me, with the queen of beauty for my for-
tune, could prevent me from regretting
your antique hall hung round with stiff-
ruffed ancestors—the lame piper—blind
harper, and good Owen's squeaking fiddle ;
our little set of three couple—but above
all, my lovely partner.

This evening I have been with Lady
Harriot, at a rout ; though no great ad-
mirer of those amusements—if I may call
them so, which appear to constitute the
great business of the lives of most ladies of
fashion, particularly the elderly ones. Cards,
scandal and flirtation, I take to be the three
centres round which the generality of the

sex revolve. The card-table, as I have already hinted, is the province of the dowagers—the field of detraction is from time immemorial the inheritance of the antient maidens — and the business of flirtation (which I confess appears to me, the most rational entertainment of the three) entirely engrosses the attention of the young ones. It is true, they frequently exchange occupations, and I have known some few ladies who possessed address sufficient to manage them all at the same time.

But I fear you will think me a perfect Smelfungus. I am indeed, very cynical to-night, and feel myself extremely dissatisfied with Dublin and its entertainments. But do not imagine my ill-humour arises from any regret of the gay metropolis I have been obliged to abandon. It is true, I left Paris with a reluctance, which no motives less powerful, than my duty and affection to Lady Harriot could have vanquished, and thought a voyage to Ireland, almost as great a calamity as if I had been exiled to the wilds of America. But my residence
at

at Bloomfield has convinced me of my error, and taught me that true society was never found in crouds. Averse from the false glare of dissipated life, it seeks the residence of domestic peace, and blesses her mansion, though it be crowned with straw. That the amiable inmates may still combine to diffuse their gentlest influence on my Delia's fate is the warmest wish of her

Affectionate brother,

ARCHER.

LETTER XXIII.

Delia Bloomfield to Lord Archer.

I Perceive, my dear brother, that your intercourse with the French, has not been ineffectual: you have acquired the art of complimenting very prettily—an art in
H 4 which

which that polished nation is allowed to excel.

What! surrounded as you are by the fascinations of the *beau monde*, you would endeavour to persuade us, that you sigh for the simple amusements of our rustic retreat! I am convinced you have more taste, and told your celestial partner a very different tale.

Why did you not gratify me with a more circumstantial description of your masquerade? for though it might have appeared insipid to you whose taste has been refined by the more elegant amusements of foreign courts—to me it would have been highly interesting; though I think with you, that novelty constitutes its greatest charm. “It is not,” you say, “adapted to the genius of the Irish.” I am glad it is not, our morals are already sufficiently relaxed, and the tendency of this diversion is by no means favourable to decency and morality. You do not even tell me what character you assumed. That of Adonis, I presume, from your choice of a partner—or perhaps
you

you chose the semblance of the blustering God of war.

Do you imagine I can be so blinded by a few partial compliments, as to overlook your severity to my sex in general? I feel an insurmountable inclination to retaliate; and methinks it requires no great proficiency in the art of rhetoric to demonstrate that your own sex appears equally liable to the censures which you have unjustly limited to ours.

“Cards, scandal and flirtation,” you observe, “are the centres round which the fashionable part of the sex revolves!”

And pray when did your sex abjure the vices of gaming, defamation and gallantry? or how long since this astonishing revolution has taken place in the polite world?

Gaming was originally a masculine entertainment; and you should not censure us so severely for practising the lessons in which you have been the first to instruct us.

And though in the science of detraction the pre-eminence is generally yielded to

our sex—I think you may without vanity dispute with us the palm of victory, even there.

“Go into a company of men,” says Yorick, “and observe with what tenderness they treat the reputation of their absent brethren.” One is accused of cowardice—a second of knavery—a third of avarice—a fourth of (the greatest of all crimes in the general estimation of the world) *poverty*!

This is beholding human nature in its most unfavourable aspect!

The gratifications which other vices offer to the senses serve in some measure to extenuate their guilt; but from this of defamation we derive no advantage to ourselves—it has no recommendation but the depravity of our own natures.

The topic of gallantry requires no illustration. Flirtation is a feminine term, and too innocent to be applied to the present subject. But the pursuits of the sex are too eccentric to be confined to any certain points; and to pursue them through
their

their involutions and intricacies of vice and folly, were a task adapted only to the genius of a Juvenal.

This is a displeasing subject; for though we may sometimes suffer ourselves to be amused with the innocent foibles of our fellow-creatures, the benevolent mind will turn with horror from the representation of their crimes. I revere the philosopher whose tears flowed for the frailties of mankind; but I detest the cynic that grinned at their vices!

Now you will accuse me of partiality; and imagine that I would turn the balance greatly in favour of my own sex.

Indeed I would not. On the whole, I believe the merit of the sexes is perfectly equal. That the lives of men are most immoral, is indisputable; but then they are exposed to a variety of temptations from which women are exempted by their guarded situation. What merit have we in virtue, if our circumstances afford us no incitements to vice? To resist temptation, is the highest effort of human excellence;

and next to this the still more arduous task of escaping the snares in which we have once been entangled, deserves the fairest praise; and many a solitary mourner, now pining in the dreary shadow of affliction, and oppressed by a sense of former deviations from the paths of virtue, at the great day of retribution will receive a larger portion of the riches of her Father's kingdom than thousands of the sex, whose souls have never been depraved by actual vice!

- “ For what is virtue but with stubborn art,
- “ To curb the strong emotions of the heart :
- “ The Hydra forms of folly to subdue,
- “ And strive with passions which *they* never knew ?”

Your epistle has occasioned a dispute, which our little community calls on you to decide. We were in full assembly when I received it—they requested to hear the contents—I indulged them—and the Dean, who is always severe in his censures on our sex, particularly the fashionable part of it, appeared greatly delighted with your strictures on our modern ladies.

Charity—

Charity—tenderness—every generous motive, incites us to vindicate the characters of the absent. I boldly entered the lists and stood forth the champion of my sex. The contention was carried on with great vehemence on both sides; and if I had not the *best*, I consoled myself with the reflection, that I had at least the *greatest* share of the argument. But he put me out of patience by observing with affected coldness “that our errors and imperfections
“ought to be regarded with compassion
“rather than with anger, as proceeding
“in a great measure from the inferiority
“of our understandings, the debility of
“our intellectual powers, and the narrow
“limits of our capacities!” Of all the various weapons of which controversy avails herself, none is so keen and pointed as contempt. Was this treatment to be endured? I absolutely denied these heavy charges and contested the point with more than feminine volubility! He, to evince the superiority of his sex, apostrophized the divine shades of Solon, Lycurgus, Socrates,

crates, Plato, &c. &c. &c. I, to evidence the equality of my own, invoked the glorious manes of the Athenian Lady who bit her tongue off—with the sublime spirit of Portia, ^{tr}Avia, Lucretia, Paulina and Patient Grizzle, of illustrious memory.

Fatigued at length, with a combat fought on both sides with such determined obstinacy, we appealed to the rest of the company who appeared greatly amused with our contention. But to my extreme mortification, I perceived that they generally leaned to the Dean's side of the argument. I accused them of partiality and most pathetically lamented your absence; but the Dean assured me with an air of exultation, "that I ought rather to rejoice in it, as
" your presence would but add to the
" number of my opponents."

Tell me then, my dear brother, what am I to think? Am I really to consider woman as a creature of an inferior nature! Or is it that the native strength and splendour of our souls are depressed and extinguished by the ignoble bondage, which that lordly
creature

creature *man*, availing himself of his corporeal strength, has imposed on us. Here I would argue from analogy, as the philosophers express it, and observe that bodily vigour and strength of constitution by no means denote in your sex intellectual capacity; but that on the contrary the most elevated souls and brightest geniuses have illumined the most imperfect and fragile tenements of clay! Why may not the observation be equally just in respect to my own? I leave this point to your wisdom to determine. If I gave my opinion I might be suspected of partiality.

Write to me then, without reserve, every sentiment as it arises in your mind. Tell me if this vital spark which glows with such animating warmth in my bosom when I contemplate the fair and beautiful productions of wisdom and genius—tell me if it had been refined and purified by the lights of science, would it have arrived at similar perfection; As a conscious vanity sometimes whispers me it would? See! I have exposed to you the weakness of my heart!

heart! Correct its errors—but excuse its misapprehensions!

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

L E T T E R X X I V .

Lord Archer to Delia Bloomfield.

WH Y does my amiable sister apply for my sentiments on a subject on which she is infinitely better qualified to expatiate. If she fears in her decision, to be suspected of partiality to her sex; mine may with more justice, be thought liable to the same imputation; for I candidly acknowledge I love and admire it a thousand times more than my own.

How shall I presume to determine on a subject on which so many sensible and elegant authors have written with various opinions?

opinions? Nor is it necessary that I should; we may amuse ourselves with speculation, and puzzle ourselves with conjecture—but this is one of those abstruse points on which we can never conclude with certainty, and, like most of the same nature, its investigation is of no real consequence to mankind.

My sentiments, however, since you desire them, you shall have; and though I cannot coincide in his Deanship's opinion in respect to the weakness he is pleased to attribute to our fair sisters, I must confess it appears to me, that the difference of sexes is not more strongly marked in their exterior forms than in their intellectual capacities: your minds, like your faces, may be more beautiful than ours, but still they are dissimilar.

And yet, if we consider the extensive influence of the body over its immaterial companion, to it, with some shew of reason, this dissimilarity may be imputed.

A blow—a fall—a little water gathering on the brain may reduce the mind to a
state

state of idiotism or insanity. Its apartment may be disarranged—its operations may be impeded—but are we thence to conclude that its native vigour is impaired?—No—it is the organs of the body which suffer—the soul continues unchanged—its essence is the same and its powers are unalienable!

In the more advanced periods of life, “when the keepers of the house tremble, “and those that look out at the windows “are darkened”—the soul seems to share the decay of her terrestrial prison, and we are almost tempted to dread that with it she is verging to her final dissolution. This phnæomenon may have puzzled the unenlightened ages, but has been deduced by our philosophers from natural causes.

The silver cord may be loosed, “the “golden bowl be broken”—the veil of mortality may thicken; it may obscure the glories of its celestial inhabitant, but cannot extinguish or impair them.

The souls of both sexes in their original state may be alike, and the different struc-
ture

ture of the body may constitute the distinction we observe.

But these are vague suppositions!—to what purpose is enquiring if it leads not to conviction?—We flatter ourselves we pursue the sacred form of truth, whilst we grasp, like Ixion, at a painted shadow.

Boys from their earliest infancy are taught to delight in those athletic exercises which are calculated to improve the native vigour of their bodily constitutions, and consequently the strength of their mental powers. The least tendency to effeminate amusements subjects them to the contempt and derision of their companions. Their natural propensities are confirmed and heightened by the cultivation bestowed on their minds.

Their ideas are enlarged by knowledge; their souls are enlightened by conviction (I speak of those who are devoted to literary pursuits). If they prove refractory and averse from learning, this mental malady is combated with the most powerful antidotes. Punishment appears in every terrific

rific form to awe the weak, and subdue the stubborn spirit; and wreaths of triumph are held out to excite in more noble bosoms a spirit of generous emulation. The improvement of their minds becomes the great business of their lives—the ultimate end to which their attention is directed. And if with a candid and impartial eye we view the superiour advantages their education affords them, we shall be tempted to wonder that so few, comparatively speaking, make a shining figure in the republic of letters.

The female mind, on the contrary, naturally susceptible and delicate, is still more relaxed and softened by the present mode of fashionable education. Most branches of useful knowledge are considered as above the sphere or beyond the capacity of the sex. Their souls are contracted by ignorance and enervated by sloth, even those amongst them whose genius or attainments enable them to rise superior to the common level, are frequently beheld by our sex, as well as their own, with illiberal prejudices.

the prejudices. Conscious of this disadvantage, and strongly influenced by that timidity which naturally incites them to endeavour to avoid the imputation of conceit and pedantry, they often bury in oblivion, talents, which under right direction might render them more agreeable to themselves—more useful to society—and more amiable to those with whom they are connected by the ties of blood, or by the bonds of friendship.

Yet notwithstanding all those unfavourable circumstances, the seeds of genius will sometimes blossom in the inauspicious soil, as the solitary shrub expands its blooms in the unfertile desert !

But as cultivation is not more necessary to the vegetable creation, than to the powers of the mind ; and as those productions of unassisted nature, which we observe to grow wild in our meadows, bear a faint resemblance to those of the same species, which are raised beneath the inspection of a skilful gardener—the uncherished blossoms wither on their stalk—the fair promise of
genius

genius is blasted—for its fruits, to arrive at perfection, require a judicious culture and a genial soil.

Nature, by concealing her treasures in her most secret recesses, seems to indicate to mankind the necessity of industry. The precious ore is torn with difficulty from the bowels of the earth; and the brilliant diamond receives its polish from his hand. He trusts not to chance for the preservation of the body—the seeds are thrown into the earth in due season, and his vigilance and forethought are rewarded with plentiful crops.

Were he to cultivate the female character with similar assiduity and attention, its powers and virtues would flourish luxuriantly beneath his fostering hand. But to it he imputes the defects which originate in himself, and because it seldom appears crowned with the brighter emanations of genius, accuses it of incapacity and sterility with the same injustice as if we should excrete our soil, because carnations, anemones

nies and auriculas, are not its spontaneous productions.

Thus the constitutional delicacy of the sex, co-operating with the defective education they receive, and the inactive habits they contract, depresses and enfeebles their intellectual faculties and renders them incapable of powerful exertions. How often have the most shining talents been lost in obscurity! how many brilliant imaginations have been extinguished in darkness!

Yet, as the silver rivulet bursts from the flinty bosom of the rock, the irresistible current of genius will sometimes bear down every opposition; and works have frequently fallen from the pens of females, written with an accuracy and elegance truly astonishing, if we consider the peculiar disadvantages under which the authors of them laboured. And indeed to me it appears evident, that women who, (like a Carter, a Montague, or a Barbauld), receive a learned education, more frequently distinguish themselves in the literary world than men possessed of equal advantages.

I mean

I mean if we allow for the great inequality of the number.

Yet, were girls trained to pursuits and studies similar to those of the other sex, the distinctions which so strongly mark the female character would still subsist, though in a less degree. The generality would still retain a disgust for the abstruser sciences. Female philosophers, metaphysicians and astronomers, would still be characters unfrequent in society; but the satyrists, the moralists, and the poets would every where abound. If women did not always write so well, they would at least write oftener than men. The brilliancy of their imaginations and the tenderness of their sentiments, would lead them more particularly to cultivate the muses; and though some masculine performances might still retain the foremost places in the ranks of literary fame, yet often would she crown her female votaries with wreaths of unfading laurel, and her trump, in notes less bold and lofty it may be, but as pleasing
and

and harmonious, would pay a voluntary tribute to feminine genius!

Your sentiments on the morality of both sexes are perfectly just.

Their souls undoubtedly proceed from the mint of Heaven, equally impressed with the sacred image of the glorious Original, but from ours a too promiscuous circulation in the world often effaces and sometimes totally obliterates the divine resemblance—whilst yours, like those precious medals deposited in the cabinets of the curious, retain the impression more entire and perfect. No longer then, let your sex term restraints so conducive to the innocence, and consequently to the serenity of their minds, “an ignoble bondage.” Even their contracted education will cease to appear a misfortune, if they reflect that enlightened and elevated understandings are frequently debased by hearts the most corrupted and depraved—that learning is not always the parent of conviction or the source of truth! but that the grossest errors, on the contrary, are her spurious

offspring! and that to find the “way of
“righteousness,” requires no peculiar il-
lumination. Let your sex then, my lovely
friend, leaving the philosopher to be-
wilder himself with his false lights, act in
pursuance to the dictates of their own in-
genious natures, and adhere to the plain
and simple path of moral rectitude, which
alone can lead mankind to solid glory, and
to true felicity.

How will you, who so piteously com-
plain of the Dean’s prolixity, relish this
tedious lecture! One advantage, however,
you may derive from it. Whenever Mor-
pheus proves adverse to your prayers, and
refuses you the solace of his balmy blef-
sings, these pages contain a spell, powerful
as the sleep-compelling wand of Hermes!
but ere this, perhaps you have experienced
their efficacy—and my sweet sister, whilst
I fondly flatter myself, she hangs with at-
tention on my words—lies supinely re-
posed in the arms of the somniferous
Deity!

If

If on awaking from her downy slumbers she should chance to cast a glance at this epistle, it will remind her of the respect and obedience of her

Devoted

ARCHER.

LETTER XXV.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

I AM not displeased at your silence, my dear Henrietta, but it afflicts me. Too implicitly do I rely on your tenderness to doubt that for an instant you could neglect or forget me, were not your attention called off by some indispensable necessity.

Your's, my friend, is a melancholy office, but the consciousness of your own virtue will sooth your anxieties. Your tender cares will restore to health the object

of your solicitude, and your filial duty will receive its reward.

I have a great loss of Lord Archer, he has written to me twice since he left us, but his letters, by convincing me of his friendship and desire to oblige me, serve only to render him the more regretted.

I am not well—my spirits are depressed, and my melancholy has been encreased by that of my companion. Wentworth's pensiveness is augmented even to sadness. He loves you, Henrietta! yet does that account for it! would to Heaven he would place a confidence in me, it might be in my power to alleviate his distress, if not remove it. What would I not do to restore the tranquility of a heart so deserving!

I see him with my grandfather in the garden.

Wentworth accosted me with an air of unusual seriousness. His countenance was pervaded by the deepest gloom—and his voice

voice was so low that I could scarce distinguish his words.

“ Mr. Wentworth is come to take leave of you, Delia,” said my grandfather.

“ Leave of me !” cried I, in astonishment, “ why ? whither is he going ?”

“ My destiny leads me to America, Madam,” replied Wentworth, with an air of the greatest dejection.

“ America ! Is that hateful country ordained to deprive me of every thing my soul holds dear !”—the past—the present—the future rushed forcibly on my imagination ! I burst into tears.

My grandfather was evidently surprized. Wentworth caught my hand with great emotion and pressed it to his lips.

“ How lovely is this sympathy !” cried he, “ Does Delia weep for me ! is she conscious of the ties that unite me to this country—does she conceive the anguish”—he stopt abruptly as if he had betrayed too much.

We stood mute and immoveable ; Wentworth and I absorbed in sorrow, and my

grandfather in astonishment, until we were joined by the Dean and my Aunt. The Dean who had business at home, hurried Wentworth away from us; but he left us with a promise, that we should see him to-morrow.

Lord Hermont, his late pupil, presses him to accept the chaplaincy of a regiment which is destined for the American service. Oh! Henrietta, he tenderly loves! and the happiness of both will be sacrificed to a point of delicacy. How cruel are the chains which custom has imposed on our sex!——Yet have we not forged them for ourselves!

Disappointed! abandoned! no longer able to flatter myself with any prospect of felicity, but what I could derive from the happiness of my friends—yours, my Henrietta, became the dearest wish of my heart—and the most effectual means of promoting it, appeared to be an union with a man so amiable in his manners and so respectable in his character. Fondly had I fixed
my

my wishes on this event—but this voyage to America must blast my hopes for ever.

Taught by sad experience, I should ere this have learnt to bear the pressure of disappointment—but thus to be thwarted in every promised satisfaction, is too afflictive to be submitted to with unrepining resignation.

I ought not to write in this strain to you—your circumstances are already sufficiently depressive. I will fly to books—to music for amusement.

I took my favourite Pope; the book opened at this passage.

- “ How happy is the blameless Vestal’s lot,
- “ The world forgetting,—by the world forgot ;
- “ Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
- “ Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign’d ;
- “ Labour and rest that equal periods keep,
- “ Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep ;
- “ Desires compos’d—affections ever even,
- “ Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to Heaven !
- “ For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring,
- “ And white rob’d virgins hymeneals sing.

- “ For her the unfading rose of Sharon blooms
“ And wings of Seraphs shed divine perfumes.
“ Grace shines around her with serenest beams
“ And whispering angels prompt her golden dreams,
“ To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away
“ And melts in visions of eternal day !

Enchanting description ! I look down with superior disdain on the allurements of the world ! I feel a kind of holy emulation whilst I read it ! Why have the females of this country no peaceful assylums to which they might fly for refuge and tranquility, when afflicted by sorrow and persecuted by misfortune !

But you will remind me that the aspirations of the faithful spirit, toiling through the wilderness of life, will sooner rise before the throne of the Omnipotent Divinity, than the lazy virtues of the cloistered monk !

It may be so, but the world has temptations—are those to blame who feeling their constancy inadequate to the trial, decline the doubtful conflict ?

The

The light dimly gleaming through the ivy that over-hangs my window—the solemn stillness that reigns at this instant throughout this mansion; together with its gothic structure, make me almost fancy myself already immured in one of those retreats of piety.

Would to Heaven I could realize the delusion! Henrietta, this estate, if I live, will one day be mine—after I have “rocked the cradle of reposing age.” After I have paid the last sad tribute of duty and affection to its present venerable proprietors—shall I convert this mansion into an assylum to the helpless and afflicted of my own sex, and with them devote the remainder of my days to Heaven! Oh! if this visionary scheme should ever be realized, perhaps my Henrietta—the sister—the friend of my infancy will become the companion of my maturer years.

Nor can I agree with those who term this species of life inactive and unprofitable—absurd in its nature and destructive in its consequences. I contend not for the

merit of the anchoret freezing in his desert—the life I would recommend is something widely different !

What is the apostolic definition of
“ pure and undefiled religion ? ”

“ To visit the widows and fatherless in
“ their affliction—to keep ourselves un-
“ spotted from the world ! ”

The nuptial and maternal ties, I own, are sacred ; yet they often contract instead of expanding the social affections, and by uniting them too closely to particular objects, preclude those more diffusive operations which render them extensively beneficial to mankind.

Many are born the children of adversity and affliction, many gentle spirits, wounded by anguish and corroded by ingratitude, turn with just abhorrence from a persecuting world—and earnestly anticipate the repose that awaits them in the silent tomb. In such, were it a crime to fly from the vain interruptions of society—entirely to consecrate their hours to works of mercy and sacred meditation ! Is not that happiness
most

most permanent which is least liable to the instability to which all human things are subject? Why then, my Henrietta, do I wish you to become susceptible of a passion which disturbs the tranquility of the soul and renders it a prey to the keenest disquietudes!

What various and delightful avocations would this state afford—the soul, refined and purified from every sensual pursuit, would become more exquisitely alive to the effusions of friendship—to the soft soothing of generous sympathy.

What joy to apply the balm of consolation to the wounded spirit—to shed the lights of instruction over the minds of the ignorant!

What refined or elegant amusement is precluded by the monastic state? Each moral page, whilst it displayed the imperfection, vanity and infelicity of human life, would give a tacit sanction to our choice,—and the sublime strains of holy

melody would raise the enraptured soul to the presence of the Divinity.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER XXVI.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

WITH what rapture would I embrace a state of life which your romantic imagination has dressed in such captivating graces! My Delia, I am weary of the world, and with you would gladly fly to the sacred haunts of solitude and meditation! My mother is declining to the grave; what an alteration has a few weeks produced in her aspect! Her form, pale and emaciated—her voice faint and tremulous—I could not command my emotion on

our

our first interview, and secretly reproached myself for having left her. Perhaps if I had not gone to Bloomfield—but my regrets are now vain and fruitless.

Her disorder is an inflammation on her lungs. Doctor P—— who attends her, is unwilling to add to my affliction, and hides from me the worst. But my prophetic heart presages the misfortune, that his benevolence would conceal.

Wentworth is going to America! Peace be with him! but will he find it in that land of tumult and desolation! — This event might have given me some uneasiness if my mind were not oppressed with a much heavier misfortune. When the soul is engrossed by one predominant affliction, it receives slighter evils with indifference. You say he loves me, but is not this intended voyage a sufficient confutation of that error? Yet I confess, I observed a particularity in his conduct—perhaps he did feel a slight inclination for your Henrietta—perhaps his pensiveness was the result of a conflict between it and ambition; but

but surely my friend may spare her compassion when that is triumphant.

You say the happiness of both will be sacrificed to delicacy. I do not see how delicacy is concerned. But why the happiness of both. You cannot, I hope, suppose me to be so very weak as to suffer mine to depend on Mr. Wentworth; and his decision evinces that I possess no greater influence over his. Let him go then, my Delia—we shall soon forget him, or remember him only with indifference and ease.

Your amiable brother will shortly return to Bloomfield, and his presence will restore your vivacity, and dispel the gloom which depresses your spirits. My mother calls for me—Adieu.

The few moments I can snatch from duty, shall be devoted to friendship.

MENRIETTA WILLMORE.

LET.

LETTER XXVII.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

MY dearest Henrietta, your fears pre-
sage the worst! I am persuaded
your mother is not so dangerously ill as
you imagine. Prevail on her to accom-
pany you to Bloomfield—the season will
soon be favourable to such an excursion.
Good air and the returning spring, will
prove greater restoratives than all the cor-
dials and elixirs in the world. Aunt So-
phy and I will undertake the charge of
nursing her—at least, we will share with
you that interesting employment. I used
to be a favourite of hers—join your en-
treaties with ours, and they must succeed.

My last letter was sad stuff, Henrietta!
mere sentimental froth—fair and showy to
the eye, without an atom of solidity, or a
grain

grain of good sense at the bottom. What! convert this good warm mansion which has been for so many centuries the favourite residence of good cheer and hospitality—into a meagre monastery!—ridiculous and absurd! The idea was as preposterous as the institution it had in view.—To make a nun of you, Henrietta! How did my fancy get entangled in such a maze of absurdities! Folly may be excuseable when it proceeds from the little levities of youth and vivacity—but such serious nonsense is absolutely intolerable.

What says the sensible and lively St. Evremond, on a similar occasion? “ Let
“ the ugly and infirm be shut up in con-
“ vents. The inspiration that directs them
“ thither is divine. It is the voice of na-
“ ture that bids them retire from that so-
“ ciety, where they can do no honour to
“ their Creator. But in your case this
“ would be a temptation of the Devil, who,
“ envious of the glory of God, cannot
“ endure the admiration with which we
“ behold the fairest of his works. Believe
“ me,

“ me, twenty long years of psalm-singing
“ will not contribute so much to that
“ glory, as the exposing your beauties one
“ single day, to the eyes of the admiring
“ world !”

But I believe I might have silenced all the scruples you have on this subject, without soliciting the assistance of so powerful an auxiliary as the French wit.

Will you forgive your Delia, if she acknowledges herself to be in the highest spirits, even though she knows her Henrietta is melancholy and deprest ?

Wentworth has administered ghostly consolation. You see I can acknowledge, without blushing, that *my happiness depends on him.*

The evening I finished the ridiculous epistle I last favoured you with, I retired early to my apartment, but could not rest. The amiable Wentworth was ever present to my imagination. I still beheld his tears

— I

—I heard his sighs. “ Ah !” cried I,
“ if I can prevent this intended voyage,
“ all may be well,—and two hearts so
“ formed by nature for each other, may
“ yet be united !”

Strongly possessed by this idea, I arose early the next morning, and as soon as breakfast was over, put on my riding dress, and ordered my horse, determined to visit Wentworth.

When I got to Firdale, the servants informed me, that the Dean was in the fields with his workmen, and Wentworth in the library. Thither I went without ceremony, and found him seated in one of his lover-like attitudes, (of which, I assure you, he exhibits a great variety) at a table on which lay some letters that he had just then finished. He arose at my entrance, and looked surprized and pleased.

“ The fineness of the day,” said I,
“ induced me to ride, and I have been
“ deputed by our friends to entreat you
“ and the Dean to favour us with your
“ company to dinner. I will not be re-
“ fused,”

“fused,” continued I, observing he hesitated, “it is, perhaps, the last favour I may ever request of you.”

My voice faltered at the idea, and I could not restrain a starting tear.

“Dear and amiable Delia,” cried he, tenderly pressing my hands, “teach me to express the gratitude, which your generous sensibility excites in my bosom! Believe,” continued he, with fervour, “that whilst my heart continues to beat, it will never forget your goodness. In whatever distant climate my adverse fortune may lead me, your idea will be my companion — and the remembrance of your friendship will for ever be dear to me.”

“If,” replied I, unable longer to restrain my tears, “if my friendship be dear to you, why do you renounce it? Does the savage climate to which you fly, contain objects more worthy your affection, than those you are on the point of relinquishing, perhaps, for ever? Other scenes may afford you more powerful
“erful

“erful patrons, but you will no where
“find friends so tender and faithful, as
“those you abandon. What are those
“forcible motives which urge your de-
“parture? Can avarice or ambition ex-
“cite these conflicts in your breast? Let
“me not think so unworthily of you.
“You speak to me of friendship—but
“friendship is a shadow divested of con-
“fidence—I abjure the one, if not deemed
“deserving of the other. I see I have
“prevailed—I see you will throw off this
“ungenerous reserve, and repose your
“distresses on a bosom of whose fidelity
“you must be assured.”

He was unspeakably affected. He took my hands, and his tears, yes, Henrietta, the amiable Wentworth bathed them in his tears !

“Yes,” cried he, as soon as he could recover his voice, “I will throw off this
“ungenerous reserve, and when I reveal
“to you the strong reasons which induce
“me to persist in my design, if you censure
“my

" my resolution, I will promise to relin-
" quish it."

I heard the Dean's voice in the hall.

" Compose yourself, my dear Went-
" worth," said I, " I am perfectly con-
" tented with your promised submission
" to my sovereign will. My heart presages
" we shall yet be happy (he sighed and
" shook his head) but you must not send
" these letters till to-morrow. You know
" you have made me the arbitress of your
" fate, and I must be obeyed. After
" dinner I will give you an opportunity
" of speaking to me in private."

I flew to meet the Dean, whom I heard on the stairs. The good man was really afflicted at his nephew's intended departure. Adversity had mollified him—he had laid aside all his petulant airs and was quite gentle and submissive.

" Well, my dear child," cried he,
" have you tried your rhetoric? Mine has
" been ineffectual; but your sex eminently
" surpasses ours in the art of persuasion,"

" So

“ So then” cried I, “ at last you are
“ obliged to descend from your pinnacle
“ of imagined consequence, and acknow-
“ ledge that a silly girl, whom you affect
“ to contemn, may excel you in the art of
“ elocution. Is this your boasted su-
“ periority !”

“ I never,” exclaimed he with impa-
tience, “ I never inferred that your sex
“ excels ours in the art of elocution. It
“ is true, they may possess some natural
“ advantages—that is—”

“ I conceive you,” said I, “ you would
“ acknowledge that eloquence, which is
“ art in your sex, is nature in ours.”

“ I would assent to no such absurd pro-
“ position,” cried he in a pet. “ Prithee
“ don’t torment me with this folly ; you
“ see I am already more than sufficiently
“ distressed. But I will forgive you every
“ thing—all your former misdemeanours
“ shall be forgotten—I will even promise
“ to listen in silence to that provoking
“ tongue of thine, as often and as long as
“ you may be pleased to exercise its
“ powers—

“ powers—you shall be the model of elo-
“ quence—the perfection of wisdom—nay
“ even the paragon of taciturnity! you
“ shall be any thing, or every thing you
“ please, if you will but prevail on this
“ dear boy to renounce his ridiculous
“ American project.”

“ Well,” replied I, laughing, “ I must
“ confess your docility merits some en-
“ couragement—and though I have been
“ already repulsed, I do not despair of
“ succeeding. I have prevailed on him to
“ dine with us to day, and you must ac-
“ company him. After dinner I intend to
“ contrive a *tête-a-tête*, and then I shall
“ make my principal attack.”

I returned home perfectly contented with
the success of my expedition. They came
a little before dinner. Wentworth vainly
endeavoured to appear chearful. Our
meal was short and silent—every one was
affected by his apparent distress.

Soon after the cloth was removed, I
arose.

“ You

" You must visit my grotto," said I, to Wentworth, " I want your opinion of some arrangements I have made since you saw it."

This measure was strenuously opposed by Aunt Sophy, who observed, that " it was a very sharp evening, and too late—besides, I had not looked quite well as usual—and that it would be dark before we could reach home."—But her objections were over-ruled by a significant nod from the Dean.

Wentworth arose and followed me. I put my arm through his, as we walked, but he seemed lost in reflection and uttered not a word until we entered the grotto. We seated ourselves.—" Never again," cried he, looking round and deeply sighing—" Never again shall I experience such happy moments, as I have enjoyed in this delightful retreat ! Why, my lovely friend," continued he, " are you thus deeply interested in the fate of a man, who appears to be abandoned to misfortune ! Deprived of both parents in
" my

“ my helpless infancy, to my uncle’s benevolence was I indebted for support and education.”

“ When I had finished my studies and taken orders — I gladly accepted an overture made me by the late Lord Hermont, to accompany his son, my present friend and patron, on the tour of Europe. What rendered such a situation particularly agreeable, was the tender friendship I had contracted for my pupil whilst together at the University. The excellent disposition and insinuating manners of my young friend, contributed to render the three years I spent abroad, the happiest of my life. But we were abruptly recalled by the sudden illness of Lord Hermont, who expired in the arms of his afflicted son, immediately after our arrival.

“ My uncle, when informed of my return, wrote in the most affectionate terms, and entreated me to visit him. I intended to accept of his invitation as soon as the grief of my friend was a little

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“ abated—

“ abated—and was indeed impatient to
“ see my benefactor after so long an ab-
“ sence.

“ I have the honour to be related to
“ Lady N——, who always distinguished
“ me by her friendship, and used fre-
“ quently to visit her. At her house I
“ first beheld your lovely friend, and be-
“ came sensible of sensations the most de-
“ lightful, and at the same time the most
“ painful I had ever experienced. En-
“ charmed by her beauty and the elegance
“ of her manners, I beheld her with plea-
“ sure and admiration unfelt before, for I
“ read in her deportment a mind superior
“ to the splendour that surrounded her.
“ The desire of pleasing induced me to
“ exert myself, and she gave me an atten-
“ tion that inspired me with rapture. She
“ was prevailed on to sing. The melody
“ of her accents—the soothing airs she se-
“ lected—the exquisite sensibility she dis-
“ played in every gesture—even a secret
“ consciousness which I felt that she was
“ not happy, conspired to render her still
“ more

“ more interesting, and by uniting sym-
“ pathy with admiration, completed the
“ conquest of my heart.

“ Those pleasurable sensations, the purest
“ delights I had ever experienced, were
“ interrupted by the Countess, who re-
“ minded her company that it was time to
“ go to the Theatre. She pressed me to
“ accompany them, but I had an engage-
“ ment with Lord Hermont, which I could
“ not break through with any propriety—
“ though I never practised so severe a self-
“ denial as in keeping it. I, however,
“ promised Lady N—— to attend her at
“ supper; and departed in a frame of
“ mind which I cannot describe. The
“ fascination of my senses still continued—
“ the beautiful Henrietta was still present
“ to my view—her enchanting voice still
“ vibrated in my ear! Lord Hermont
“ perceived the alteration of my temper,
“ and feared lest some untoward accident
“ had occasioned it. Then, first did I
“ conceal my sentiments from my friend,
“ and attributed the confusion and per-

“ plexity of my manners to a violent head-
“ ach. I left him early and flew to Lady
“ N——’s. They returned soon after-
“ wards from the play accompanied by the
“ Duke of B——, with whom I was
“ well acquainted, as he is uncle to Lord
“ Hermont.

“ Henrietta appeared, if possible, more
“ beautiful—more captivating than ever!
“ She joined in the conversation with a
“ spirit that enchanted me; again she sung
“ —but I will not attempt to describe sen-
“ sations, which those who have never ex-
“ perienced them cannot possibly com-
“ prehend.

“ The Duke appeared no less enchanted
“ than myself. He attached himself to
“ Henrietta Willmore with an assiduity
“ that alarmed me; though his years in
“ some measure secured him from my
“ envy.

“ When the company broke up, the of-
“ ficious Duke would not allow me the
“ satisfaction of leading her to her car-
“ riage; but he could not prevent me

“ from

“ from following it home. I saw it stop—
“ I saw her enter a magnificent house with
“ her mother; and as the miser contem-
“ plates the casket which contains the trea-
“ sure of his soul, I continued to gaze on
“ the house, when she was no longer visi-
“ ble; I soon, however, recollected the im-
“ propriety of my situation, and returned
“ home.

“ Here I had leisure to collect my ideas,
“ and reflect on the infatuation which en-
“ flaved my senses. But how dearly did
“ I suffer by this inspection. I beheld the
“ object of my presumptuous wishes,
“ equally the favourite of nature and of
“ fortune, adorned with beauty and en-
“ circled with splendour, and my heart,
“ in secret anguish, then first repined at
“ the lowliness of my fortune. Melan-
“ choly were my reflections, and deep were
“ my regrets. I called to my assistance
“ the retrospection of my orphan state—
“ forlorn and abandoned by every one but
“ the Dean, to whose charity I was in-
“ debted, even for subsistence. I then

“ contrasted my situation with that of your
“ friend, and the event of the comparison
“ was a fixed determination never to see
“ her more.

“ In pursuance of this resolution, I
“ hastened to Firdale—but solitude af-
“ forded me too much leisure for reflec-
“ tion. If I read, the dear remembrance
“ stole my attention from my subject—If
“ I walked, my imagination still presented
“ the same fascinating idea, and I often
“ wandered I knew not whither, till I found
“ myself involved in the dreary shades of
“ night. Yet time would have restored
“ my tranquility, and effaced impressions,
“ which, though strong, had been but
“ transient.

“ Such was the situation of my mind
“ when I first saw you at Firdale. To say
“ I admired you, my lovely friend, is too
“ cold an expression to do justice to my
“ sentiments. We have read of the influ-
“ ence of sympathy on congenial spirits—
“ I seemed to experience the effects of this
“ mysterious impulse ; for, from the first
“ hour

“ hour I beheld you, my soul sprang for-
“ ward to meet you, with the warm af-
“ fection with which it would have re-
“ cognized a friend of long tried worth
“ and virtue. Your enchanting vivacity
“ restored me to myself, and I almost
“ began to forget your Henrietta, when
“ her picture which you wore (you cannot
“ forget the incident) recalled her with
“ new force to my memory; and I re-
“ joiced to find the two loveliest women
“ in the world united in the sacred bonds
“ of friendship.

“ My heart experienced a new conflict,
“ when I heard of Henrietta Willmore’s
“ intended visit to Bloomfield. To avoid
“ meeting her by immediately returning to
“ town, was the measure my prudence
“ suggested to me—but how weak are the
“ dictates of prudence in opposition to
“ those of love! Besides, my uncle was
“ then so ill, that I could not, without
“ apparent ingratitude forsake him, and I
“ was pleased with an opportunity of apo-

“logizing to myself for the weakness of
“my conduct.

“To love your friend appeared to
“be my destiny—and I no longer endea-
“voured to resist the enchantment. Every
“interview encreased my passion—nor,
“till I was awakened from my delirium
“by her abrupt departure, did I once re-
“flect on the consequences of which it
“must be productive. Yet even then I
“flattered myself. Henrietta, I thought
“had treated me with some distinction—I
“learned with pleasure that her expecta-
“tions were less splendid than I at first
“imagined; I had powerful friends—in
“fine I suffered my deluded fancy to form
“a thousand gay scenes of felicity; but
“a letter I received from Lord Hermont
“has dissolved them for ever.”

“From Lord Hermont!” interrupted
I, “what intelligence could it contain?”

“Intelligence the most fatal to my re-
“pose! It informs me (a circumstance
“of which surely you cannot be ignorant)
“that the Duke has offered his hand to

“Hen-

“Henrietta Willmore, and that she con-
sents to accept it.”

“This is the most charming piece of
news I have heard this age!” cried I,
“I shall have the honour of being friend
to a Duchess! I wonder whether her
Grace will grow imperious and forget
her old acquaintances. I dare say,
Wentworth, you’ll have the pleasure of
performing the ceremony: I know she
has a great regard for you.”

If I had said you detested him, he could
not have flown into a more violent fury.

“A great regard for me!” cried he,
rising, in a voice equally expressive of pas-
sion and surprize. “I am certainly
greatly indebted to Henrietta Willmore
for her *regard*—and no less to you, Ma-
dam, for the obliging manner in which
you assure me of it. How little, Delia
Bloomfield, was I acquainted with your
character—how very ridiculous have I
rendered myself in disclosing my weak-
ness to——.”

“ Such a light, vain, unfeeling crea-
“ ture as Delia Bloomfield—have I con-
“ cluded this sentence to your fancy ?”

“ It is to be presumed, Madam, you
“ are best acquainted with your own
“ merits !”

There’s the gentle, submissive Went-
worth for you, Henrietta—his eyes glared
—and his whole frame was agitated with
passion.

“ So,” cried I, “ are all your myste-
“ rious impulses come to this !—Well, it
“ must be acknowledged this *sympathetic*
“ *intercourse* of our *congenial spirits* is won-
“ derfully delightful.”

“ Madam, you may spare yourself this
“ trouble—you cannot render me more
“ ridiculous than I have already made
“ myself.”

“ Very true, indeed, your observation
“ is perfectly judicious—but why should
“ you *not* be ridiculous—its quite the *ton*
“ at present—and it would be cruel to
“ deprive you of a privilege of which you
“ gentlemen are so fond of availing your-
“ selves.

“ selves. There’s the Duke now for in-
“ stance, what could equal his absurdity
“ in circulating the silly report you allude
“ to (if he did circulate it) except Lord
“ Hermont’s in repeating, or yours in
“ believing it.”

“ Was the report then groundless!—
“ Dearest Delia—on my knees I entreat
“ you!”

“ What—are your *mysterious impulses* re-
“ turning! Is the bright congenial flame
“ again lighted in your bosom! But I must
“ begone—I feel myself growing extremely
“ hysterical. The savage wildness of the
“ scene that surrounds us, together with
“ the ferocious glances which you just now
“ favoured me with, have thrown me into
“ the horrors—I shall not recover my
“ spirits this month.”

“ Dear Delia, how can you torment
“ me! But I have merited it—I ought to
“ have been acquainted with your dispo-
“ sition—I ought to have known that
“ benevolent heart was incapable of tri-
“ umphing in the distresses of a fellow-
“ creature.”

K 6

“ So

“ So you ought indeed—but come, rise”
(for he had fallen in a state of prostra-
tion at my knees) “ let us have done with
“ this folly, it grows late, finish your
“ story.”

“ I have nothing more to add,” replied
he, “ than that influenced by my hopeless
“ passion, I determined to accept the of-
“ fers of Lord Hermont, and to this effect
“ were the letters I was this morning wri-
“ ting, and which you insisted I should
“ postpone sending. But has my friend
“ deceived me? Is Henrietta really disen-
“ gaged? Yet of what consequence is it
“ of to me! has not fortune placed an in-
“ superable barrier to my wishes!”

“ Not to my knowledge,” replied I.

“ How, Madam,” replied he, “ would
“ it not in my present situation be the
“ height of presumption to raise my views
“ to Henrietta Willmore? Or could I,
“ with a shadow of honour or genero-
“ sity, endeavour to influence her in my fa-
“ vour!”

“ You

“ You gentlemen have the most convenient method of reconciling things,” replied I, “ Now for my part, I think you have done every thing which the length of your acquaintance would admit of, to influence her in your favour. Your lips, perhaps, may have never declared your affection; but I’ll swear your eyes have done it a thousand times, and she must have been a novice indeed if she could not interpret their language. This is an error common to your sex. You imagine your honour entirely disengaged, so long as you keep clear of professions, whilst, without scruple you discover an attachment by assiduities and attentions more expressive, and infinitely more interesting, than words. Has not this been your conduct in respect to Henrietta? However, I do not mean to insinuate that you have made any impression on her heart. She has been too much accustomed to admiration and gallantry to be much affected by them at present.” (There, you see I had a
“ proper

proper regard to your delicacy), poor Wentworth appeared embarrassed.

“Your silence,” continued I, “is a tacit confession of your error, and though I cannot flatter you that my friend loves you, I may with safety assure you of her warmest approbation and esteem; and if you are not very unreasonable, you will think these sufficient. True love is not to be vanquished by trifling difficulties.”

“Trifling, do you call them,” repeated he, “sure you must have *forgotten*.”

“—— No, I remember every obstacle, yet still pronounce them trifling, as they entirely originate from the narrowness of your fortune. You are very unjust to my friend if you think splendour and magnificence necessary to her repose. Previous to her father’s death she was accustomed to the calm serenity of a country life. How often has she since regretted those tranquil pleasures; how often wished to exchange for them the scenes of dissipation in which she has
“reluc-

“reluctantly engaged! Formed for domestic life, her chief enjoyments must be derived from it; from the society of a worthy and amiable man; from the œconomy of her family, and the education of her children. Yes, my dear Wentworth, possessed of Henrietta and six or seven hundred a year, you would be rich.”

“Rich,” interrupted he, catching me to his breast in an extacy, “I should indeed be richer than all the monarchs of the East! But Delia, do not flatter me! can Henrietta descend.”

“For heaven’s sake, friend,” interrupted I, “reserve your tender pressures for your goddess, and be pleased to remember that I am only your poor friend Delia! What silly creatures you lords of the creation are! One instant sunk in the gloomy depths of horror and despair; the next elevated as suddenly to the pinnacle of felicity, whirled from thence by your own absurd imaginations, you lie grovelling in the abyfs of misery,
“and

“ and arising as instantaneously, you spring
“ on the wings of hope to the summit of
“ human happiness! For shame! recol-
“ lect the superior dignity of your na-
“ ture, and leaving these childish incon-
“ sistencies to us weaker vessels, act con-
“ formably with it.”

“ My fate is in your hands,” replied he, smiling, “ and I must allow you to
“ tyrannize.”

“ Well then,” returned I, “ since you
“ have made me the arbitress of your des-
“ tiny, the first use I make of my newly
“ assumed power is to insist on your burn-
“ ing the letters you wrote to-day—and re-
“ linquishing your American project—at
“ least for the present.”

“ I wish,” replied he, “ I may find all
“ your mandates so easy to obey.”

“ However,” returned I, “ you must
“ not yet acquaint the Dean with the alter-
“ ation of your plan, as I think it expe-
“ dient to hold a consultation with the old
“ gentleman on the subject.”

“ You

" You are so much better qualified
" than I."

" Hush ! no more flattery—you remind
" me of Fontaine's fable. You act the
" part of Maitre Renard—I am the poor
" cajol'd *Corbeau*, and Henrietta the *fro-*
" *mage*."

Aunt Sophy's impatience could no longer
brook my absence. The great bell was
rung—and I saw several servants coming
towards us.

My companion was quite in extacies as
we walked homewards. He gave my
hands twenty tender squeezes—he even
kissed them and grew so immoderately ten-
der, that I became apprehensive I had cir-
cumvented you and inadvertantly usurped
your empire in his breast. I intimated my
fears to him, but he only laughed at my
terrors, and gave me to understand they
were entirely groundless.

Aunt Sophy met us in the garden and
scolded me for staying so late.

The Dean followed me into the drawing
room, and asked, " had I succeeded ?"

" Not

“Not yet,” I replied, but said, “I
“did not despair, and would visit him
“next morning to acquaint him with the
“particulars of our conversation.”

“God bless you,” cried he; “you are
“a good girl; and though I am some-
“times provoked at your archness, I love
“you in my heart!”

“The good man pressed me to his breast,
“and kissed my cheek.”

“Very fine, truly,” cried Aunt Sophy,
who came to call us to tea, “I think even
“the poor Dean can’t escape you, Delia!”

“Dear Aunt,” replied I, “how your
“jealousy betrays your passion! I solemnly
“protest it was the Dean who followed
“me hither, though I cannot help ac-
“knowledging that such flirtations are
“equally inconsistent with the dignity of
“his cloth—his advanced period of life
“and his engagements with you.”

“Pshaw,” cried he, angrily, “how I
“detest this absurdity! Nature has en-
“dowed you with an understanding su-
“perior to your sex—but you disgrace it

“by

" by folly which would ill become the lips
" of a babe. He that buries his talent in
" the earth is an unprofitable servant; but
" he that perverteth it to wrong uses shall
" be beaten with many stripes. Besides,
" St. Paul warns us against ' foolish speak-
" ing and jesting which is not convenient.'

" True," replied I, " but St. James
" tells us, that ' the tongue is an unruly
" member, which no man can tame.'—Now
" if *man's* superior wisdom avails him no-
" thing, it were presumption in a poor
" weak *woman*, like me, to hope to con-
" troul it."

Aunt Sophy laughed at my answer,
which enraged him still more. I saw the
storm ready to burst and fled from it.

I found Wentworth " immersed in co-
" gibundity of cogitation." They went
as soon as we had done tea, but his Dean-
ship before he left us, condescended to re-
mind me of my promised visit.

I retired to my apartment, where I con-
tinued until summoned to supper.

I ob-

I observed on entering the room, that the ancients looked wonderfully wise and solemn, and preserved their gravity and taciturnity during the continuance of our nocturnal repast. Even after the attendants were withdrawn, perceiving not the least symptom of relaxation in their muscles, I began to fancy they had been metamorphosed into owls and bats, like the Grecian who profaned the feast of Bacchus, and prepared to march off to my own chamber, apprehensive lest I should undergo the same disagreeable transformation.

My aunt, perceiving my intention, requested me to stay.

“ We have something to say to you,
“ Delia, which nearly concerns your happiness !”

Down I sat.— “ My happiness ! for
“ heaven’s sake let me know it !”

I might have sat for the picture of curiosity. Never did I feel the influence of that passion more powerfully.

My aunt and grandmother looked at each other with the utmost significance,
who

then directed their eyes to the baronet, who sat in his elbow-chair fumigating us with tobacco, with the most consequential air imaginable. At length the old gentleman after a solemn pause laid his pipe upon the table, and

“ In smoke, like oracles of old,

“ Did thus his sentiments unfold.”

“ Your conversation with Wentworth yesterday in the garden, my dear Delia, has revealed to us a secret of which we had very little suspicion.”

—He paused.—

“ Why, my love,” rejoined my grandmother, “ why would you not generously place a confidence in your friends. If Mr. Wentworth and you are attached to each other, why, on that account, must he be exiled to America !”

“ I am sure,” says Aunt Sophy, my brother can’t be so unreasonable as to deny his consent. He has too much conscience not to let you please yourself.”

“ Heyday !” thought I,—“ what have the good folks got into their wise heads !

“ —are

“—are they going to marry me to Wentworth?”
“worth?”

Astonishment entirely deprived me of my wonted volubility—I sat lost for a time in speechless wonder.

“I thank you, my dear friends,” said I, recovering myself—“believe me, this excessive goodness excites in my breast an adequate return of gratitude—but the consent of the person whose suffrage is most essential, is still to be obtained.”

“Surely,” replied my grandfather, “you cannot mean Lady Harriot; and there is no probability of my son’s withholding his.”

“The person I allude to is no other than Mr. Wentworth himself—for indeed this is the first time this bright conceit ever occurred to either of us. However, if you are grown weary of me, and can persuade him by your eloquence to rid you of the burden, it will be undoubtedly my duty to acquiesce in your measures.”

“Explain

"Explain yourself, Delia," said my grandfather, "I have been accustomed to hear from your lips the language of sincerity. How am I to interpret the mutual tenderness of which I was yesterday witness! What am I to think of your tears—of Wentworth's apparent distress—were not even his words."

"Ambiguous, I allow," interrupted I, "and consequently liable to misinterpretation. But believe me, my dear Sir, if Wentworth has a *penchant*, it is not for your Delia."

"But the occurrences of this day," resumed Sir Richard with a puzzled air.

"You need say nothing about them," interrupted Aunt Sophy, with quickness, "I am surprized, brother, how you could lead us into such mistake."

"Sister Sophy, you contributed more than I did to the error. I did not report that I saw Wentworth at Delia's feet in the grotto this evening—I did not."

"I wish

“ I wish, brother,” cried poor Aunt Sophy in great confusion, whilst I turned and darted at her an indignant look. “ I wish you could let the matter rest—I see no occasion for mentioning.”—

“ Nor I neither,” said I, “ for I already comprehend the whole affair—my prudence was suspected—my ingenuousness was doubted—I was not deemed sufficiently qualified to take charge of my own conduct, and was therefore watched.”

“ Dear Delia,” replied she in greater consternation,—“ how can you look so angry? you know I cannot bear it. I solemnly protest I only went to get you in for fear of catching cold—to be sure when I saw Wentworth and you I was greatly surprized—but I am sure whatever I said or did, was with the best intention in the world—but as to going to watch you, I am sure I never dreamed of such a thing. You know I have no view but to your happiness.”

“ I do

“ I do indeed, my dear Aunt,” cried I, taking her hand. “ Forgive my teasing you—my anger was pretended—it is a passion which you never did, nor ever can excite in my breast—a breast you can never inspire with any sentiments, but those of the tenderest affection and the warmest gratitude.”

I will not fatigue you, my Henrietta, with a repetition of the caresses and endearments bestowed on your Delia, by her too partial friends: and yet methought, they seemed rather disappointed when convinced of their error. They ardently wish me to marry, yet loving me so fondly as they do, why should they desire me to enter a state which, though it could not alienate from them my affections, would in a great measure deprive them of my society.

I went the next morning to make my promised visit to the Dean. As I rode across the lawn, I saw him watching for me at the window. I leaped from my horse and ran to him—he was delighted to see

me and apologized for his testiness the preceding evening.

I immediately gratified his impatience by repeating the greatest part of my conversation with Wentworth. He seemed surprized, but not displeased at the discovery of his attachment to you; and asked if I thought you returned it? I replied, that at present your preference of Wentworth arose no higher than the esteem and admiration which it was natural to feel for a man so amiable; but as I knew you to be free from any other engagement, I thought he might reasonably hope for a return of his affection. “Lady Willmore’s affairs,” said I, “will shortly be settled; and Henrietta will be possessed of near five thousand pounds. Wentworth it is true, is at present unprovided for, but he has powerful friends.”

“If their souls,” replied his Deanship, “are cemented by mutual affection! they will not require the glare of meretricious pomp to render them contented. Besides, as the parent of Wentworth, I

“see

“ feel it highly encumbent on me to con-
“ tribute as much as in me lies to his pro-
“ sperous establishment; and will therefore
“ resign my living at ———, amounting
“ to three hundred per annum; reserving
“ to myself this at Firdale, the produce of
“ which is nearly double that sum—more.
“ over I doubt not but my interest may
“ secure to him the reversion of the living
“ of which I shall straightway put him in
“ possession. Add to this the interest of his
“ friend and late pupil, Lord Hermont—
“ together with his own talents (which you
“ must allow me to say are somewhat ex-
“ traordinary) and you may perceive with-
“ out any superior penetration, that his
“ alliance will be by no means disadvan-
“ tagous to your friend.”

Contrary to my usual custom, I listened to his Deanship's harangue with infinite satisfaction; and when it was concluded, entreated him to permit me to call Wentworth and acquaint him with his favourable intentions.

“ My dear Edward,” cried the Dean, when he had made his entrance, “ how
“ very unkindly have you treated me! On
“ what account was I deemed unworthy
“ of your confidence! how much pain
“ would a manly ingenuoufness on your
“ part have saved us all!—nay, had it not
“ been for the interposition of this dear
“ girl, would you not have totally abandoned me in my declining years—and
“ these eyes, soon closed in death, had
“ never beheld you more.”

“ My dear Sir,” replied Wentworth, “ your reproaches wound me deeply! I
“ am conscious I have merited them; but
“ kind and indulgent as I have ever found
“ you, could I flatter myself that a passion so aspiring would meet your approbation?

“ For what reason should you doubt
“ it?” replied the Dean, “ have I ever
“ professed myself an enemy to virtuous
“ tenderness? when inspired more especially, by an unexceptionable object?
“ Henrietta Willmore is an amiable and
“ beautiful

“ beautiful woman. She has always been
“ possessed of my warmest approbation;
“ indeed, had you the liberty of an un-
“ limited election—there is but another
“ whom I would wish you to prefer to
“ Henrietta.”

“ That’s my ladyship, I presume,” said
I,” curtsying.

“ Aye presuming enough! But Hen-
“ rietta will soon become my greatest fa-
“ vourite—she possesses sense and good na-
“ ture without your troublesome flippancy.
“ But you have been perverted by our
“ blind indulgence, and it is meet that we
“ should patiently submit ourselves to a
“ grievance, which was originally the con-
“ sequence of our own folly.”

Poor Wentworth could not contain his
gratitude when the Dean acquainted him
with his purposed resignation of the living.
I too shared largely in his effusions—I
was his “ sweet Delia”—his “ charming
“ friend” his “ guardian genius!”

They insisted on my dining with
them. I complied, and dispatched a ser-

vant to inform my grandmother of my intention.

We were in the highest harmony.—The Dean only laughed when I attempted to tease him—his good humour was invincible—and he even divested himself of some of his pomposity. I never saw him so pleasing—he was really quite irresistible.

I passed a very happy day, and Wentworth rode home with me in the evening. He told me it was necessary he should go immediately to Dublin to apologize to Lord Hermont for the rejection of his offers—and asked me if I thought a visit from him would be unacceptable to you?

I replied, that he could not, consistently with politeness, decline waiting on you: but that if he was modest and wished an excuse, I would supply him with one, by sending a letter by him. He seemed delighted with the commission, and said he knew it would secure him a welcome reception. He is to send early for this letter to-morrow. I should blush for its size were it on any other subject.

Farewell ;

Farewell; it grows very late—if you love me, treat poor Wentworth kindly. I have taken him under my protection, and will not suffer any one to torment him but myself. He is to write to me, so I shall hear all your manœuvres.

Adieu, once more

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LETTER XXVIII.

The Rev. Mr. Wentworth to Delia Bloomfield.

HOW generous, my dear Delia Bloomfield, is the interest you take in my fate! your consenting to correspond with me is a new obligation—but I already owe you more than I can ever repay, and acknowledgements only demonstrate my poverty without evincing my gratitude. Yet,

L 4

notwith-

notwithstanding your efforts, I fear your friend is still doomed to be unhappy !

I rode post the morning I left Firdale, and arrived in Dublin at four o'clock. I immediately sent my servant to Lady Willmore's, with a note to acquaint Henrietta Willmore I was in town, and request permission to attend her at seven in the evening. She was so obliging as to write an answer, in which she said she should esteem my visit as a favour. I waited impatiently, yet not without fear and anxiety, for the appointed hour and was there rather before the time. A servant in a superb livery ushered me into a magnificent drawing-room. I beheld with terror the splendor that surrounded me—and almost execrated the vanity that prompted me to hope that Henrietta could prefer the humble fortune I had to offer her, to that elevated sphere, to which her beauty, her accomplishments and her birth so eminently entitled her.

My reflections were interrupted by her entrance. She came accompanied by a lady

lady whom I had never seen. I arose and advanced half way to meet her, but felt an awkwardness I had never before experienced. There was a coldness in her address which chilled me; how different were her manners at Bloomfield! How have I forfeited her esteem?

Our conversation naturally turned on our friends at Bloomfield. But I still perceived the same constraint in her manners. Lady Willmore has been worse—Henrietta looks pale and dejected, but beautiful as ever. Tea was brought in, and immediately after the Duke was announced—Henrietta Willmore's colour changed, and his entrance threw her into manifest confusion; but she received him with great respect and politeness—she gave him indeed a much more cordial reception than she had honoured me with.

He seemed somewhat surprized at our rencontre—and I frequently observed him to dart the most scrutinizing glances at Henrietta. Methought too he regarded me with less complacency than usual. But

he is a man of the most perfect good breeding, and it is consequently impossible to arrive at the knowledge of his sentiments from his manners.

Though the interview did not appear agreeable to any of the party, none seemed desirous of being the first to depart. When we had sat near two hours, I grew apprehensive of being troublesome to Henrietta Willmore, and after expressing my fears that we had prevented her from attending her ladyship (this I intended as a hint to his Grace) I presented your letter and said I would have the pleasure of waiting on her for an answer. Then first throughout the evening did I see her beautiful features animated by a smile.

I turned to the Duke and thought he examined me with those suspicious looks I have already observed. However, I had the satisfaction of hearing him follow me down stairs and his carriage drove past me in the street.

I found Lord Hermont waiting for me at my lodgings—he had heard by accident
of

of my arrival and was come in search of me. He was engaged to sup with Lady N—— and insisted on my going with him. I would willingly have excused myself, but it was impossible to refuse his friendly solicitations, and I accompanied him to the house where I had first beheld Henrietta Willmore.

Lady N—— received me with her usual gaiety and good humour. She introduced me to her daughter whom I had not seen since she was a child, and asked me “how I liked my cousin?”

I said that, “if she thought the question necessary she must entertain a very mean opinion of my taste.”

“Why yes,” replied she, patting Lady Charlotte’s cheek as she spoke, “the girl is well enough, though not quite so beautiful as Henrietta Willmore.”

I felt thunderstruck at this observation, which I foolishly imagined was levelled at me.

“Oh!” cried Lady Charlotte, “the poor Duke was here to-day—he is quite

“ *au desespoir*—Lady Willmore’s illness is
“ a most unlucky event for him. I sup-
“ pose it prevents him from entertaining
“ his fair idol since her return from the
“ country.”

“ Indeed,” said Lady N—— (addressing
Lord Hermont) “ I cannot help consider-
“ ing his Grace’s attachment to Henrietta
“ Willmore as a very fortunate circum-
“ stance, though perhaps your Lordship
“ will have no reason to think so.”

“ Your Ladyship is mistaken,” replied
Lord Hermont, “ if you imagine I have
“ any objection to my uncle’s forming a
“ connection with a lady so deservedly ad-
“ mired as Henrietta Willmore. Indeed
“ my only regret is on the lady’s account,
“ for though I acknowledge his Grace to
“ be a very respectable personage, I can-
“ not be so extremely partial as to think
“ him an object calculated to inspire a
“ tender passion in so young and so fair
“ a bosom.”

“ A tender passion !” repeated her lady-
ship, with a smile—“ is it a time to sacri-
“ fice

“ fice to the indulgence of the tender paf-
“ fions when furrounded by ruin and de-
“ veftation? Lady Willmore’s affairs are
“ in a moft desperate fituation. She had
“ always a fpirit fuperior to her fortune—
“ always imprudently ranked on a level
“ with thofe above her. Henrietta too
“ was very high in her views, and to my
“ knowledge rejected feveral very advan-
“ tageous propofals; however, her circum-
“ ftances were not then in their prefent
“ wretched fituation. The family eftate is
“ already difpofed of—and nothing but her
“ ladyfhip’s illnefs prevents them from
“ quitting the houfe they at prefent occupy.
“ I think, my Lord, you would do well to
“ take it—it would fuit you extremely.
“ The fituation is delightful, and it is ele-
“ gantly finifhed. Probably we fhall have
“ an auction of the goods. You fhall at-
“ tend us to it, and may then fee the houfe.
“ Befides, there are fome paintings remark-
“ ably fine, brought from Italy by the late
“ Lord Willmore—and the ornamental
“ china is fuperb.”

“ Oh,”

“ Oh,” cried Lady Charlotte, “ I must
“ positively purchase the Indian cabinet
“ and mandarines ; my dressing-room is
“ quite incomplete. I wonder whether
“ we shall have the sale soon ?”

“ Why,” returned her ladyship, “ I
“ believe the report of the intended alli-
“ ance with the Duke has rendered their
“ creditors more placable.”

“ Is it then intended, Madam ?” asked
1, in a faltering voice.

“ Yes,” replied she, “ on his side I am
“ convinced it is—and though I know
“ Henrietta to be one of those romantic
“ young ladies who talk sentimental non-
“ sense about the tender passions like my
“ Lord here, I cannot suppose her so in-
“ fatuated as to reject an offer so splendid.
“ If she does, whatever may be her fate
“ I shall not compassionate it.”

“ I am of a different opinion,” replied
Lord Hermont, “ and could not without
“ the deepest regret, behold a victim so
“ beautiful and amiable led to the shrine
“ of Mammon.”

“ Absurd,”

“ Absurd,” cried her ladyship ; “ was
“ it you, Wentworth, who inspired your
“ pupil with those antiquated ideas ?—
“ Since inoculation has been so generally
“ practised, beauty is become cheap ; but
“ even its most passionate admirers will ac-
“ knowledge that the gem appears to most
“ advantage when set in gold. There are
“ others (casting a conscious glance at her
“ daughter) as beautiful, perhaps, as
“ Henrietta Willmore, and possessed of
“ superior rank and splendid fortune. If
“ the Duke were young, to such he would
“ probably aspire ; as he is not, he is con-
“ tented to wave his pretensions to the
“ latter advantages—and bestows wealth,
“ title and magnificence on a person who
“ brings him in return nothing but youth
“ and beauty. Thus you see the balance
“ is greatly in her favour.”

“ Ah,” cried Lord Hermont, (if you
will allow me to pursue my metaphor)
“ do the gaudy trappings which adorn the
“ votive heifer, and the flowers which
“ wreath her horns, blunt the edge of the
“ murde-

“murderous steel, and lessen the horror
“of the sacrifice?”

“Very poetical indeed!” said Lady Charlotte, “but I think we shall not employ you to write Henrietta Willmore’s
“epithalamium, lest the composition
“should resemble a funeral dirge, rather
“than a song of triumph!

The conversation was interrupted by some company; but I cannot express the impression it left on my mind. I viewed the Countess and her daughter with a disgust little short of horror.

“Gracious heaven!” said I, offering up a mental ejaculation—“if magnificence
“and riches petrify the breast, and render
“it callous to the soft impulses of humanity and of sentiment—still may I
“continue in this humble sphere, and let
“my fortune still flow in the same scanty
“stream!”

One discovery I made in the course of the evening is, that her ladyship has designs on Lord Hermont for her daughter, and indeed I am afraid he is already rather
partial

partial to her. However, I shall leave no method untried to counteract this scheme; as Lady Charlotte is by no means the person to whom I should wish to see my amiable pupil united. I already perceive in her many faults and deficiencies which may not be very obvious, but my attention to his happiness has rendered me watchful.

The united advantages of youth, beauty and a fashionable education—like a splendid veil thrown over a deformed object, may dazzle the sight of the superficial observer; but the eye of discernment easily penetrates the artificial texture, and discriminates the imperfections it is calculated to conceal.

But tell me, my sweet friend, ought I still to listen to the flattering voice of hope after my cold reception from Henrietta Willmore, and the conversation I have this night heard? That she is ardently pursued by the Duke is too evident. How many circumstances concur to render his alliance acceptable—indeed his age alone appears unfavourable to him, but then
will

will not her filial duty plead powerfully in his behalf?

I am alternately elated with hope and distracted with apprehension—but I will no longer tease you with my anxieties.—The servant who attended me to town returns early to-morrow to Firdale. Send me an immediate answer, I entreat you.

Adieu,

Your ever faithful,

WENTWORTH

LETTER XXIX.

Delia Bloomfield to Mr. Wentworth.

WHAT a novice thou art! Henrietta's coldness, the most favourable symptom in the world, alarms you.—But thus it is ever with your undiscerning sex—sorry politicians as you are! Notwithstanding

withstanding your boasted powers and faculties, "the present moment terminates your sight," whilst ours, with the acuteness of the "lynx's beam," penetrates the veil and even reads the dark births of fate in the bosom of futurity.

Listen then, with the humility of a disciple, whilst I, with the wisdom of a sage expositor, reveal to your view the intricate recesses of the female breast.

An elegant author observes that "great pride always accompanies delicacy."—To trace to its source the simplest passion or affection of the human mind were a task far beyond the limits of my abilities; but might he not have maintained that it even constituted its existence? Pride is a comprehensive term, but an indeterminate one.

The poet says, that conscious virtue is allowed some pride!

It was this pride, or rather this internal evidence of worth and greatness which the philosopher had in contemplation when he delivered that celebrated maxim, "Reverence thyself."

Ought

Ought we not to give this noble emanation of the soul some appellation to distinguish it from that little sordid passion which is the parent of meanness, vanity and vice?

It is to this pride, which in the female breast assumes the name of delicacy, that men who wish to be beloved by women of worth and understanding must address themselves. The finer the sensations—the quicker the sense of delicacy and propriety, the more this feeling will predominate; in minds of this cast it becomes the ruling passion, and the soul which, in the cause of love, can triumph over vanity, interest and ambition, sacrifices love itself at the shrine of this favourite idol. A woman conscious of tenderness for a man who does not return it, or returns it with less fervour than she thinks it merits, could sooner die than suffer her manners to betray her sentiments—though her solicitude to conceal, may sometimes disclose, them to a discerning eye.

I do not however pronounce this to be Henrietta's case. Neither would I insinuate,

sinuate, that disdain and coldness are infallible symptoms of tenderness—though they are by no means certain indications of the reverse.

Indeed, if Henrietta viewed your conduct in the light I did—nothing could be more natural than the coldness you complain of, if your assiduities made any impression on her mind. She saw you on the point of renouncing her for ever—of sacrificing her to ambitious and lucrative views—for to no other motives could she attribute your purposed resignation of your friends and country; and whilst she considered your conduct through this medium, nothing but the most perfect indifference, or the most consummate hypocrisy, could have enabled her to receive you with her accustomed good humour. May you, my friend, find her as remote from the one as I know her to be from the other!

But what am I doing—traitress that I am!—Betraying the secrets of my sex! putting arms into the hands of its enemies!

“ ’Tis

“ 'Tis like the poisoning of a dart,
“ Too sure before to kill !”

Oh Wentworth ! if you are ever so fortunate as to possess my Henrietta's heart, treat it with the tenderness it merits ; and do not, like thousands of your sex, wantonly trifle with the tranquility of a breast that loves you. We can only judge of the feelings of others by our own—but those of the sexes are so widely dissimilar, that it is impossible for the generality of yours to form any conception of the extreme distress of which the female mind is susceptible. You injure a person who disdains to recriminate ; who conceals her wounds with the most anxious solicitude from the hand that inflicts them, and who often, beneath the mask of a smiling countenance, hides a corroded and despairing heart ! How applicable to this subject is the pathetic expostulation of the poor frog in the fable—“ it may be sport to you, but it is
“ death to us !”

What

What harpies are that Countess and her daughter! Must the Philistines divide the spoils of my poor Henrietta. Are they already impatient to tear from her the little remnants of her former prosperity.

Unthinking—unfeeling wretches! You are right, Wentworth. Your amiable friend must not marry that worthless Lady Charlotte.

Still harping on the Duke. Have I not already assured you that Henrietta will never encourage his pretensions. You say he pursues her with ardour. 'Tis hard, methinks, if you cannot outrun him in the chase, considering the weight of years he carries on his head!

The post will bring you this letter in a few hours. I shall expect an answer tomorrow, but, indeed my dear Wentworth, if I hear any more of your anxieties and apprehensions, I shall be tempted to doubt the reality of your affection.

“ For love will hope where reason would despair.”

But

But you seem to have reversed this adage!

Adieu,

Your's ever,

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

P. S. The Dean and I are as fond as turtles, and Aunt Sophy is half mad with jealousy. We have prevailed upon him to pitch his tents here, till your return.

L E T T E R X X X.

Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.

I FEAR, my dear Delia, I shall be again tormented with this Duke. He favoured me with a visit yesterday evening. Nothing particular passed. His manners are extremely polite and tender—indeed quite too tender. I wish he would give me an opportunity of revealing my sentiments.

ments. I am uneasy lest he should misconstrue my conduct—besides, to keep him in suspense is cruel. Yet it is hard—very hard to be obliged to begin on such a subject! I had some thoughts of applying to Lady N—— to acquaint him with my sentiments—but my knowledge of her character obliges me to reject this measure. She would consider my resolution as an insatiation little short of madness—and I should be harassed with long prudential lectures which I have neither leisure to listen to, nor spirits to support.

I have this instant received a card from Mr. Wentworth! He will visit me in the evening. To take leave, I suppose—it is a disagreeable ceremony, and I would most willingly dispense with it! I had an inclination to excuse myself on account of my mother's illness—but as it is probably the last time we shall ever meet—Indeed, my dearest friend, my spirits never were so depressed as at present; I am mortified at the weakness of my own mind—every trifling incident afflicts me—I wish I could decline

seeing Wentworth this evening—but it is now impossible.

My friend Miss Edgemore is to come to spend the day with me—she is very attentive to me—almost another Delia.

Ah, my dearest Delia, I have seen him and have read your letter!

Poor Wentworth! did he then love me! and would an hopeless passion have driven him to America, but for the intervention of my Delia—my good angel!

I fear I have treated him with great coldness. I thought he appeared mortified at my manner of receiving him—but I was really distressed at his fancied voyage, and so great was the dejection of my spirits that I found it impossible to assume the least ease or cheerfulness; and what added to my embarrassment, was the presence of the Duke, who, unluckily, was announced immediately after Wentworth. I never passed two hours much more disagreeably—but was surprized that Wentworth did not
mention

mention his intended voyage. When he arose to be gone, he gave me your letter, and said he would have the honour of calling for an answer before he left town.

I acknowledge this event has occasioned a great revolution in my sentiments; for though I do not think I was absolutely in love with Wentworth, to deny that I greatly preferred him to every other man would be disingenuous. Indeed, my dear Delia, you have a strong propensity to match-making, and have taken as much pains with Wentworth and me as with the Dean and Aunt Sophy. Though in the former case, I hope your efforts will be crowned with greater success than they have been in the latter.—Is not this confession candid?

I have been all this day in the most uneasy state of suspense—every instant expecting Wentworth. My heart palpitates at every rap—and I have been tormented all the morning with visits of condolance. He will certainly guess the subject of your letter—I wish you had not sent it by him.

M 2

I know

I know I shall feel extremely awkward when we meet.

Lord Archer often visits me. We join in regretting our delightful parties at Bloomfield. He treats me with the affection of a brother—and expresses for my Delia sentiments as tender as my own. I wish your mutual admiration arose to love—he is one of the most amiable men I ever knew.

No, my friend, we cannot accept your affectionate invitation. The season is not sufficiently advanced, nor is my mother yet able to undertake even so short a journey. Besides, our absence from town would deprive us of the advantage of Doctor P——'s advice, which I take to be of the utmost consequence. She is better to day, and I acknowledge I found your epistle a great restorative.

No Wentworth yet! He sent to make enquiries indeed! The Duke is more attentive—and seldom omits a day—though he generally stays no longer than five minutes. If Wentworth grows negligent,
I shall

I shall prefer my antiquated lover, I think.

He has been here—we had a long tête-à-tête—a full explanation—Oh my dearest Delia, if my mother was well I should be too happy. Possessed of a friend so invaluable—a lover so generous! Could I form even a wish to encrease my felicity!

I cannot repeat our conversation. I was so confused and embarrassed that I scarcely knew what passed. As Wentworth is to acquaint you with our manœuvres, I leave it to him. I hope he has a better memory than I. He seems in no haste to return to the country, so I shall send this letter by post.

Adieu,

Your ever faithful

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

M 3

LET-

L E T T E R X X X I.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

WENTWORTH and you have treated me extremely ill. Is it through design or indolence you refer me one to the other for the particulars of an eclaircissement I have been at such infinite pains to produce? But no matter—I don't imagine I sustain any great loss by your silence—for whenever I feel an inclination to regale myself with a love scene, I dare say any of our new sentimental comedies or novels will supply a variety as interesting and amusing as those of Henrietta Willmore and Mr. Wentworth.

But this is not the worst. I am even accused of match-making. This is adding ingratitude to negligence. In sooth, I
cannot

cannot sufficiently admire the astonishing and inexhaustible fund of patience which enables me to support such accumulated insults.

You wish Lord Archer and I loved each other. Now suppose you could endeavour to repay me some of the obligations you owe me in this respect, by persuading him into a passion for me. I believe no damsel of my age and circumstances was ever reduced to so piteous a plight. I am really more deserted and desolate than Aunt Sophy—for she has the Dean, you know,—whilst I, alas! have not even the shadow of a lover. Ah, why did I not exist in that golden age of romance and chivalry, when a fair lady of an enterprizing genius, like me, might mount her milk white palfry and sally forth in quest of adventures! And in quest of adventures forth I will sally very shortly—so you must direct no more letters to me at Bloomfield. If my enchanted dragons oppose my resolutions it will be in vain!

M 4

Adieu.

L E T T E R X X X I.

Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.

WENTWORTH and you have treated me extremely ill. Is it through design or indolence you refer me one to the other for the particulars of an eclaircissement I have been at such infinite pains to produce? But no matter—I don't imagine I sustain any great loss by your silence—for whenever I feel an inclination to regale myself with a love scene, I dare say any of our new sentimental comedies or novels will supply a variety as interesting and amusing as those of Henrietta Willmore and Mr. Wentworth.

But this is not the worst. I am even accused of match-making. This is adding ingratitude to negligence. In sooth, I
cannot

cannot sufficiently admire the astonishing and inexhaustible fund of patience which enables me to support such accumulated insults.

You wish Lord Archer and I loved each other. Now suppose you could endeavour to repay me some of the obligations you owe me in this respect, by persuading him into a passion for me. I believe no damsel of my age and circumstances was ever reduced to so piteous a plight. I am really more deserted and desolate than Aunt Sophy—for she has the Dean, you know,—whilst I, alas! have not even the shadow of a lover. Ah, why did I not exist in that golden age of romance and chivalry, when a fair lady of an enterprising genius, like me, might mount her milk white palfrey and sally forth in quest of adventures! And in quest of adventures forth I will sally very shortly—so you must direct no more letters to me at Bloomfield. If my enchanted dragons oppose my resolutions it will be in vain!

M 4

Adieu.

Adieu. Heaven only knows from whence I may next direct to you.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

L E T T E R XXXII.

Delia Bloomfield to Mrs. Sophia Bloomfield.

Merrion-square.

AS you conjectured, my dear Madam, my father and Lady Harriot were greatly astonished at my unexpected appearance. I got to Merrion-square just before dinner, and the instant it was over flew to my Henrietta, who knew not of my arrival till I held her in my arms. I cannot express her joy. Lady Willmore is no worse, but watching and anxiety have greatly altered our poor friend.

Wentworth

Wentworth and Lord Archer, who had dined together and had not heard of my being in town, joined us in the evening. I shall begin to fancy myself in reality a person of consequence, and grow vain of the satisfaction my presence seems to inspire. Wentworth received me with transports of joy. With what heart-felt pleasure did I contemplate the happiness of the most amiable pair that nature ever framed!

Your presence, my dear Aunt, was only wanting to complete my satisfaction.—How would your feeling heart have exulted in the felicity which its own benevolence dispensed.

Last night Lady Harriot obliged me to accompany her to the drawing room. I complied with some reluctance, for you know I never much admired the castle. There was a great many of the nobility, and amongst the rest Lady N——and her daughter Lady Charlotte Leeson.

Lady Charlotte is really a pretty elegant little figure. She has been educated at Paris, and affects the manners of the French.

Have you never been shocked with an awkward imitation of a fine painting, which presents to our view the outlines of the piece it is intended to copy—divested of the softness of shade and luxuriance of colouring which diffuse over the original the glow of animation and the elegance of order. The vivacity, wit and genius of the French were above the purchase of her little ladyship, who was obliged to content herself with importing a double cargo of their levity, their loquacity and their verfatility.

Lady N——, whom I have often seen at Lady Willmore's, condescended to recognize me. Lady Charlotte, whom I happened to sit by, began a conversation, or rather a complaint, of which the shocking stupidity of Dublin was the subject. From it she adverted to the charms of the French metropolis.

Paris—dear Paris! was the topic on which she expatiated with rapture.—The gay region of felicity! the source of inexhaustible delight! I listened in silence, but
was

was not her only auditor. On the other side of her sat a young man of a very pleasing aspect. He was in mourning, and there was something in his air which strongly prejudiced me with an opinion that he was Wentworth's friend, Lord Hermont. Or perhaps it was his dress and his attention to Lady Charlotte, which inspired the idea.

"Heavens!" cried her ladyship, after near half an hour of uninterrupted declamation, "what would I not give this evening for one of our *petits soupers*! I cannot support the tediousness of my existence—and shall absolutely expire with *ennui*. Do, my Lord, say something brilliant, if you have any compassion for me."

"If I had any brilliant ideas," replied he, "your request would be sufficient to dissipate them. Of all talents, wit is the most refractory and least subject to its possessor. Abhorring constraint and scorning compulsion—it spurns at controul and laughs at solicitation. It darts

“ when least expected with the rapidity of
“ a meteor, and we are scarcely sensible of
“ its presence when it vanishes from our
“ sight.

“ For aught I know,” replied Lady
Charlotte, “ this may be a very just de-
“ finition of your *English* wit, but the
“ *esprit* which animates the gallantry of
“ the French is quite another thing. Oh
“ it is the most charming talent in the
“ world ! There’s the Marquis de Tre-
“ veau, the wittiest creature in the uni-
“ verse ; he can be witty whenever he
“ pleases—as long as you would wish, and
“ as often—I always used to send for him
“ when I felt myself vapourish.”

“ Then your ladyship,” said I, “ ap-
“ plied him as you do your sal volatile,
“ when you get the head-ach.”

“ Exactly so—but his conversation is
“ more reviving than all the sal volatile
“ in nature.”

“ It is indeed astonishing,” replied I,
“ that the volatile essence, though always
“ exposed

“ exposed to the air, should never evaporate.”

“ It is in truth a phænomenon,” said Lord Hermont, “ which would be hard to account for on chymical principles.”

“ Oh not in the least,” said Lady Charlotte, “ if the Marquis were here, he would explain it in an instant. He is the most divine philosopher! He traces every thing to its source—then his dissertations are so lively—and he flies with such a charming rapidity from one subject to another—that all you can remember of his conversation is, that it is the most delightful thing in the world.”

“ And the most improving also from your ladyship’s account of it,” said I, smiling.

“ Oh vastly improving—you know we are all philosophers in France.”

“ Pray,” said I simply, “ may I ask your ladyship, what it is to be a philosopher?”

“ What

“What is it to be a philosopher!” repeated she with great surprize—“sure every one knows what it is to be a philosopher!—It is to be a—it is to understand philosophy.”

“And what is philosophy?”

“Philosophy! O philosophy is a charming thing—every one knows in France what it is—it is spoken of in all companies—you hear of it every where.—It is to talk of every thing—to understand every thing—it is in short to——.”

“I see,” said Lord Hermont, laughing, “your ladyship is not much accustomed to the Socratic mode of argumentation, which this lady seems to have adopted—your perplexity reminds me of that of the Athenian Sophists.”

“The Athenian Sophists—O I have heard of them an hundred times—and of Socrates and Lycurgus and Dionysius and Tiberius—and all the rest of the old Grecians—they are all old acquaintances of mine. We talk of them incessantly in France.”

“Then

“Then your ladyship,” methinks, said I, “seems to retain but an imperfect remembrance of your old friends.” I arose without waiting for a reply.

The specimen I have given you of Lady Charlotte’s conversation, was sufficient to confirm the idea I had received of her character, and the disgust I had already conceived to it.

I joined some ladies at the other side of the room, and shortly after Lord Hermont leaving Lady Charlotte to her meditations, took a chair that was vacant beside me. I confess I was not displeased with this little triumph over a person I disliked, and received his lordship’s attention with more complacency than I should probably have done in other circumstances.

Wentworth and Lord Archer soon after came in—Wentworth presented his friend, who looked pleased and surprized on hearing my name. His reverence I find has made him his confidant—and I suppose has been expatiating on his favourite text,
the

the wonderful sweetness and generosity of my disposition.

They both visited us this morning—we are all, except Wentworth, to be at a ball at the Rotunda to night. Lord Hermont solicited the honour of my hand for the first dance. I hope Lady Charlotte will be there—I shall take a pleasure in mortifying her. You remember Wentworth's letter—I cannot forgive her barbarity to my poor Henrietta.

Lord Hermont, I am convinced, can never love her; their souls are too dissimilar—he is an amiable young man, and his conversation, though rather sentimental than animated, is pleasing and instructive.

I intend to spend all my mornings with Henrietta, and my evenings too when I have no particular engagements. Wentworth and she are as tender a pair of turtles as ever coo'd in the groves of Arcadia; so it is fit I should sometimes leave them to themselves. I shall write to my grandmother.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear aunt, I need not assure you of my duty and affection.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

P. S. In my next I hope I shall have some adventures to entertain you with.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

Sophia Bloomfield to Delia Bloomfield.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED your letter of the 13th instant, and am glad to hear you got safe to town. I knew you would rather have driven with the bay hunters, but thought it safer to order Softly and Creeper to the chaise, who, though they are slower, are sure. I wish you could have been prevailed

vailed on to let my Martha attend you instead of your own Jenny. It would be much more proper to have a discreet, stayed, elderly person about you than such a frippery young body; not, but that Jenny is a good girl in the main, only too giggling and tawdry. However, I gave her a deal of advice before she left us, which I hope will have a good effect on her.

We dined yesterday at the Dean's, and had the finest chickens and ducks I saw this year. His Winifred is a most excellent housekeeper—I protest she is quite a treasure, and has a most charming hand at raising a pye.

From what you say of that Lady Charlotte, I believe she is a conceited young flirt—and her conversation appears to me no better than arrant nonsense. It would be a thousand pities that any good sober young man should be troubled with her. I suppose she will turn out just such another good-for-nothing piece as Lady Willmore. Though to be sure the men only
get

get what they deserve, when they marry such fantastical baggages; what better can they expect of girls that are taught nothing but to dance, dress, thrum on the harpsichord and chatter French; as if they could not talk nonsense enough in their own language.

Though you say Henrietta is so happy, I am sure she must suffer a vast deal on her mother's account. To say the truth, there never was much good in her, and, Lord forgive me if it be a sin, but I should not be one bit sorry to hear she was dead. She has squandered away a fine property on kickshaws and follies. I wonder how folks can reconcile such doings to their consciences, for my part. It is hard to be extravagant and honest at the same time. Not that I grudge any thing that has been done for Henrietta — she deserves it if it was twice as much, poor thing! — and as for you, my dear child, you will have enough to content any reasonable person.

The

The Dean made a most edifying discourse yesterday on the vanity of riches—in which he very plainly demonstrated, that it was much easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. I am sure I shuddered when I reflected how many opportunities I had neglected of doing good in my generation—and when I got home, I ordered a double quantity of broth to be made for the poor. If the pains and penalties of riches are so great, I cannot help thinking people are well off not to be hampered with them.

I hope you won't neglect your health, which is of such consequence to all your friends. If you find any return of your cough, I beg you will lay a large piece of flannel on your breast—but, above all things, avoid wet in the feet.—I shall want no entertainment when I know you are well and happy. It is true, I wish to see you comfortably settled in the world—but as for *adventures*, as you call them,
I think

I think a young woman cannot have too few. I see no good they do but to fill people's heads with stuff and nonsense, and, as the Dean says, home is the proper sphere for women.

Your Robin was a little shy at first, but he is grown quite familiar. The fawn is as wicked as he can be; I protest there is no enduring him, he eat a large piece out of the Marseilles petticoat I gave Martha. If he is let to go on, he won't leave us a stitch to our backs; I wish you would give me leave to have him made into a pasty. Poor Fido pined sadly the first two days after you left us; but he is beginning to eat and comes on purely. I poached him three eggs this morning, and the poor thing seemed to eat them with an appetite.

Buy me a pound of basilicon and a yard of green oil cloth. On looking over my stores, I found a deficiency in these useful articles. Your grandmother will write to you by to-morrow's post. I send this letter by a safe private hand. Let me

me be kindly remembered to my nephew,
Lady Harriot, and Lord Archer.

God blefs you, my dear child.

I remain

Your affectionate Aunt

and fincere friend,

SOPHIA BLOOMFIELD.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

W

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Your affectionate Aunt

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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